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“CHESTNUTS”





# “CHESTNUTS”

BY  
ERNEST WELLS  
(“*SWEARS*”)

LONDON  
SANDS & CO.  
12 BURLEIGH STREET, STRAND

1900



*TO MY*  
*MEMBERS, PAST AND PRESENT*

(“SWEARS”)



## ILLUSTRATIONS

PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
CHESTNUTS, A SKETCH BY JOHN HASSALL . . . . .	<i>Face page 5</i>
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## CHESTNUTS, ALL 'OT!

SOMETIMES when an author produces a new book, or an editor introduces the latest thing in journals, he begins by apologising for the poorness of his venture, and often ends by expressing an opinion that the work or newspaper will supply a long felt want. I am not going to apologise for these *Chestnuts*, nor do I think that the world would have come to an end had they never seen the light. It has struck me, however, that it might be of interest to explain how they came to be gathered together, and how I am able to announce that "Alone I did it."

It was just after the appearance of the second of the volumes with which I have been associated, I was dining with one of my old members, a friend who had been on the first committee of the Pelican Club, and the conversation turned on *The Scarlet City*, of which he was pleased to express approval of.

"Now," said he, "what are you going to do next? Once having embarked on authorship you are not likely to give it up, particularly as I presume it not only brings praise but profit."

"But, my dear 'Swears,'" my friend went on, "what the dickens are you keeping all your good stories for? You can't take them to heaven with you. I have known you a good many years, and many a



hundred yarns I have heard you spin, without often repeating yourself. What have you done with them all? You have not exhausted your stock in either *The Pink 'Un* and the *Pelican* or *The Scarlet City*. What do you propose to do with the rest?"

I answered that I supposed I should keep them for after-dinner and smoking-room use.

"Nonsense," said my Candid Friend, "you now have a public far larger than even your large circle of friends, which looks upon you as a sort of Ally Sloper of the dinner table, who can perennially spin good yarns, and this public is always asking for more. Much, of course, depends upon the way a story is told, and frequently the effervescence of the champagne is lost in cold type; then, too, you have a style of your own, a style which your collaborators have not quite caught."

"Well," said I, "what are you driving at?"

"Only that you should yourself publish a collection of some more of your stories. Don't bother about a framework, just get a shorthand writer—not a pretty typewriter, you dog—who will take down what you tell him. As to grammar, spelling, and stops, that, as Cecil Raleigh used to say, is the business of the printer."

I took my friend's advice, and arranged with a charming gentleman to come and sit with me whenever his journalistic duties would permit, and just jot down my recollections. But it was terribly tedious work telling stories in cold blood to a man who did not know the people I was reminiscing about, and, I am afraid, hardly appreciated my ideas of humour. Still we made some progress, and after several sittings my reminiscences began to grow alarmingly. I had





no idea it required so many slips of paper to record a little story.

Next I reported progress to my Candid Friend, who approved of what I had done to a certain extent, but reminded me of so many incidents that I had forgotten that I begged him to come and act as my remembrancer, as I was sure it would be much easier for me to recall old jokes and adventures with the aid of one who had assisted at many, rather than sit under the cold eye of the stenographer while I racked my brains to provide him with copy.

My Candid Friend agreed, with certain limitations, and we next proceeded to think of a title for my *magnum opus*.

### CHESTNUTS, ALL 'OT!

was finally decided upon, owing to the moral conveyed by my simple stories, and the antiquity of some of them, and if the reading of them recalls to old friends pleasant hours they have spent with their Proprietor, or gives a timely hint to young fellows whose life is all before them, it will encourage me to issue

### MORE CHESTNUTS,

of which, as my Candid Friend says, I have an unlimited supply.

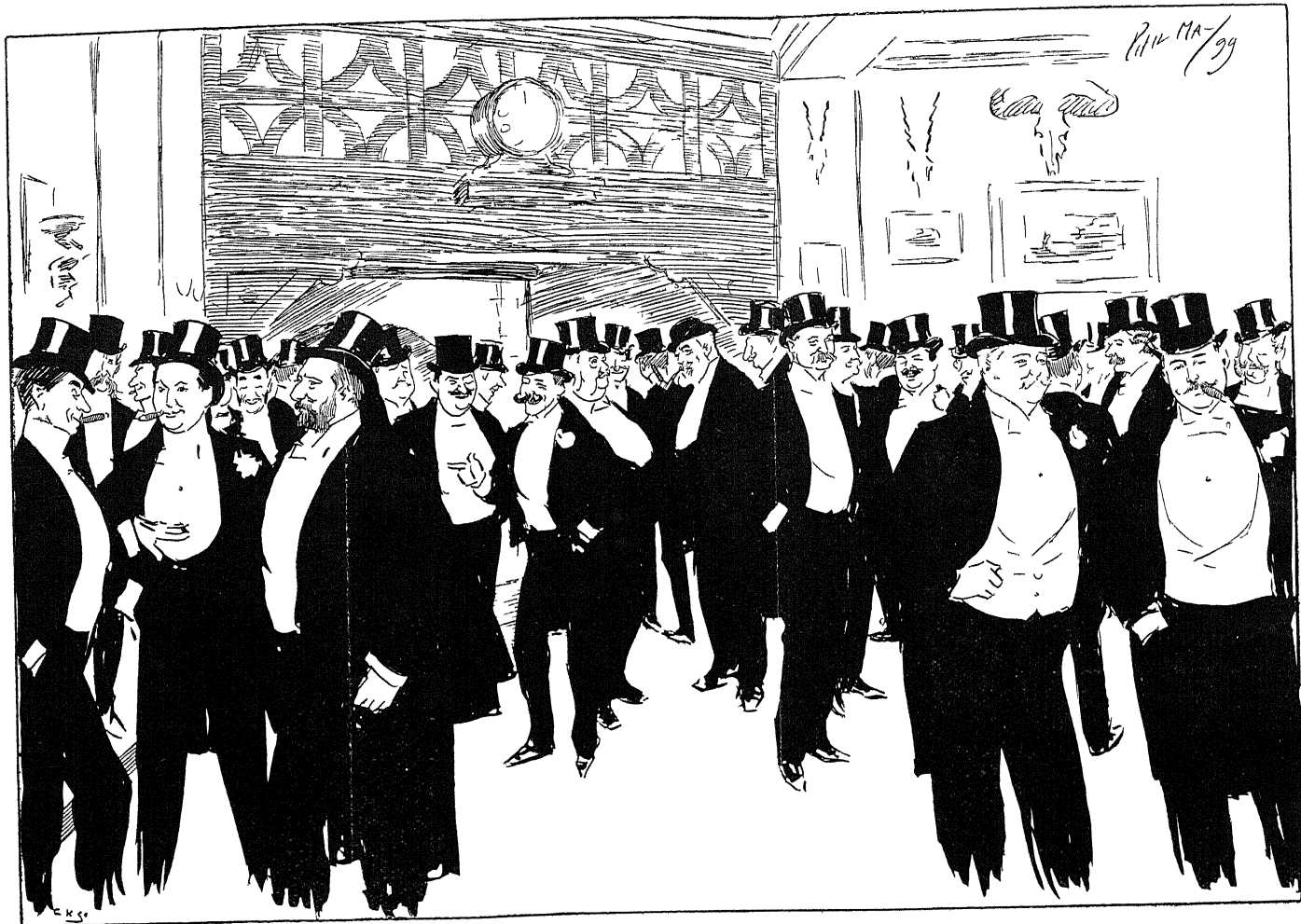
In the chapters on Prize Fights I have seen, I have to acknowledge my grateful indebtedness to Mr David Christie Murray, Mr R. P. Watson, and Mr Byron Webber.



## NOTE BY THE CANDID FRIEND.

As will be gathered from the foregoing, there has been no attempt at fine writing. In company with a stenographer I have gathered the pearls of wit and wisdom as they fell, and endeavoured as far as possible to preserve the raciness of the *raconteur*. One word with regard to the persons mentioned by name. As many of "Swears'" contemporaries are now Pillars of the State, Church Dignitaries, Legal Lights, City Magnates, and not a few millionaires, they probably would not care to be reminded of the indiscretions of youth. So, as far as is possible, assumed, or pet names, have been used, and while the intimates of the originals will recognise their friends, it may amuse the general body of readers to endeavour to discover the identity of those who, if not men of humour, have been the cause of providing fun for others.

Pink MA/39



C.K. 54







## TO PELICANS ALL.

It had been my intention to have addressed a few words to my old Members, asking them to rally round their Proprietor and listen to his Chestnuts, but the forming of a list of friends made me very sad owing to the gaps Death had made in their ranks, and I abandoned the idea. An old Pelican, my friend The Amorist, suggested stringing together a few verses, and he approached the subject with recollections of many cheery evenings spent in the company of those he sings of. How he has performed his task the reader will be able to judge, but his most indulgent critics will be the Pelicans to whom his jingle will conjure up a pleasant past, and I hope pleasant memories of their "Good Old Proprietor."

"Chestnuts," oh yes, my good "Swears,"<sup>1</sup> I can sing to  
you

Of Chestnuts like Stockwell the first of his race,  
Or, is it that memories of "Conquerors" still cling to you  
When you were a boy with an innocent face?

Ah no, it is tales of "Old Times" and old love affairs,  
Of Stars and their Garters, of Pelican fights,  
When loving and fighting were not such kid glove affairs,  
And dogs had their days when they turned up the  
lights.

<sup>1</sup> Ernest Wells.

But since you would have me make rhymes dedicating  
them

To all your "dear members" both present and late,  
Put your "Chestnuts" in hope of, perhaps, expurgating  
them

To roast on the bars of the Thieves' Kitchen's grate.

Come pull up your chair, and let's gaze in the embers,  
like

Innocent children for faces we love,  
And, as you recount me what every old member's like,  
I'll throw in a rhyme just to brighten the stove.

That ash and red coal are the topper and features of  
Jim Selby, we all of us counted him great,  
And had for authority eminent teachers of  
Youth, in "The Duke"<sup>2</sup> and the sturdy old "Mate."<sup>3</sup>

See, behind is a coach, and ahead four white horses are,  
And the seats are all filled with the best that are born,  
"The Major"<sup>4</sup> and "Uncle"<sup>5</sup> in her Majesty's forces are,  
And so is "Brer Rabbit"<sup>6</sup> who's blowing the horn.

Bob Cosier and "Ned"<sup>7</sup> have got prominent places too,  
And Clem and Dan Finch are adorned like the best ;  
While "Shifter"<sup>8</sup> and "Shirley"<sup>9</sup> are presenting three  
Graces to  
A Bishop whom "Hughie"<sup>10</sup> has asked as his guest.

"Mons"<sup>11</sup> has a play and is carefully reading it  
To Hamilton's Duke and to Manchester's pride ;<sup>12</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The Duke of Beaufort.

<sup>7</sup> Lord de Clifford.

<sup>3</sup> Sir John Astley.

<sup>8</sup> W. F. Goldberg.

<sup>4</sup> Major Robert Hope Johnstone.

<sup>9</sup> Reginald Shirley Brooks.

<sup>5</sup> Captain Andrew Haley.

<sup>10</sup> Hugh Drummond.

<sup>6</sup> Fred Russell.

<sup>11</sup> Claud Marius.

<sup>12</sup> Viscount Mandeville.

While "The Colonel"<sup>13</sup> is drinking their health and  
not heeding it,  
And "The Squire"<sup>14</sup> is indulging in hot baths inside.

Teddie Solomon's playing the airs incidental too,  
Till "Dorothy" Alfred<sup>15</sup> has taken his place ;  
While "Charlie"<sup>16</sup> is making remarks detrimental to  
Gus Harris, who's snoring a beautiful bass.

Thus do the dead men—good fellows each one of them !  
Indulge in the follies they practised on earth ;  
If men had such hearts we could do with a ton of them,  
And forgive all their faults for the sake of their mirth.

A curtain of smoke shuts out the dead faces of  
The many good fellows we sorrow for yet ;  
But still we have left cheery boys in the places of  
Those who loved much and who paid the last debt.

As the scrip is a play more or less appertaining to  
Our soldiers and horses, the experts draw round  
"Sir John"<sup>17</sup> and "The Babe"<sup>18</sup> the details are ex-  
plaining to  
Little Count Kinsky who's looking profound.

George Lewis is telling the author the tangle that  
He's got all the law of the courts and the race,  
And "The Dwarf"<sup>19</sup> is explaining to good old Jack  
Angle that  
The point is as plain as the nose on his face.

<sup>13</sup> Colonel North.

<sup>14</sup> George "Abington" Baird.

<sup>15</sup> Alfred Cellier.

<sup>16</sup> Charles Harris.

<sup>17</sup> Sir John Willoughby.

<sup>18</sup> Arthur Coventry.

<sup>19</sup> Colonel Newnham Davis.

Joe Hornsby is asking of Harry de Windt if he  
 Thinks Klondike or India for cricket is best ?  
 While Chetwynd<sup>20</sup> has promised the "Juggins"<sup>21</sup> a  
 hint if he  
 Hears an outsider is good for the rest.

George Edwardes is forming the usual syndicate,  
 M'Calmont has taken a sixpenny share,  
 On the board are both Churston<sup>22</sup> and "Sugar,"<sup>23</sup>  
 who indicate  
 That "Derry"<sup>24</sup> and Lurgan<sup>25</sup> must not take the  
 chair.

Wyndham and Hawtreys and Roberts employment seek,  
 "Carlton"<sup>26</sup> is hawking the stock rather loud ;  
 "Bill of the Play"<sup>27</sup> writes "the public enjoyment seek,"  
 Noel Fenwick and "Sam"<sup>28</sup> are financing the crowd.

"Sir Jarge"<sup>29</sup> and Sir Mat.<sup>30</sup> and John Delacour supers  
 are,  
 And "Master"<sup>31</sup> has offered to lend each a cob ;  
 Sir Simon<sup>32</sup> and "Salt"<sup>33</sup> and Lee Barber the troopers  
 are,  
 The winner will carry bold "Bonnetty Bob."<sup>34</sup>

Baron Max<sup>35</sup> is indulging in semi-hilarity,  
 Muttieberry will stroke anything that may start ;

<sup>20</sup> Sir George Chetwynd.

<sup>21</sup> Ernest Benzon.

<sup>22</sup> Lord Churston.

<sup>23</sup> Major Candy.

<sup>24</sup> Lord Rossmore.

<sup>25</sup> Lord Lurgan.

<sup>26</sup> Carlton Blyth.

<sup>27</sup> William Yardley.

<sup>28</sup> Samuel Lewis.

<sup>29</sup> Sir George Wombwell.

<sup>30</sup> Sir Matthew Wood

<sup>31</sup> John Corlett.

<sup>32</sup> Sir Simon Lockhart.

<sup>33</sup> Capt. Malcolm Drummond, R.N.

<sup>34</sup> Charles Thompson.

<sup>35</sup> Baron Max de Tuyll.

"Mr Alfred"<sup>36</sup> and Leopold<sup>37</sup> vow that their charity  
Gives them more pleasure than horses or art.

And "Natty"<sup>38</sup> sits stroking his beard and keeps ponder-  
ing,  
Proud of his Father, first Jewish M.P.,  
His race and his House and his name, and still wondering  
If he could do good to poor you and poor me.

Hwfa Williams will issue the Seats to Society,  
And "Dizzy"<sup>39</sup> and "Peter"<sup>40</sup> look after the notes,  
'The Duke of the Cherry Garden'<sup>41</sup> sees to propriety,  
And "Uffy"<sup>42</sup> takes care of cigars and the coats.

The time runs along and yet that isn't half of it,  
And yet it may prove just a trifle too much--  
If any old Pelican's hurt at the chaff of it,  
Time has indeed put us all out of touch.

Where are there nowadays jolly good fellows like  
"Roddy"<sup>43</sup> and "Briggs,"<sup>44</sup> Freddy Wombwell,  
Clonmell,<sup>45</sup>  
Harry Tyrwhitt,<sup>46</sup> Fred Leslie? The thought of them  
yellows like  
Gardenias we laid on their graves for farewell.

The women who loved them, the places that knew them  
too,  
Arise in our memory and make our eyes dim,

<sup>36</sup> Alfred de Rothschild.

<sup>37</sup> Leopold de Rothschild.

<sup>38</sup> Lord Rothschild.

<sup>39</sup> Coningsby Disraeli, M.P.

<sup>40</sup> The Hon. Peter Westenra.

<sup>41</sup> W. Elliot.

<sup>42</sup> The Earl of Craven.

<sup>43</sup> Roddie Owen.

<sup>44</sup> Lord Douglas Gordon.

<sup>45</sup> The Earl of Clonmell.

<sup>46</sup> The Hon. Harry Tyrwhitt  
Wilson.

They're gone like the kisses and girls that they blew  
them to,

For here's Piccadilly, but where is its "Jim?"<sup>47</sup>

Gone are the tenners, and gone Charlie Cuninghame,<sup>48</sup>

Gone are the horses we backed for our bits;

In the land of the Shades, Fieddy Hobson is running  
'em,

And riding them too as he rode Austerlitz!

Gone are the days of the Prize Ring and Fighting Men

When "Q"<sup>49</sup> and when Caledon<sup>50</sup> took off the  
gloves,

Lord Grannie<sup>51</sup> made books, but has now joined the  
writing men,

Leaving Westbury,<sup>52</sup> Heygate,<sup>53</sup> and Blake<sup>54</sup> to back  
doves.

The Corinthian and Evans's where supping we  
sweltered in,

Dancing till daylight, are closed to the brave;

The Barn where like owls and like bats we then  
sheltered in

Is shut, and the stones are as bones in a grave.

Dead is *The Hawk* too, the bars of its cages are

Gilt with the wit of the men who're now great,

For if you examine, you'll find that its pages are

Brilliant and fearless and still up to date.

<sup>47</sup> Colonel Farquharson.

<sup>50</sup> The Earl of Caledon.

<sup>48</sup> Sir Charles Fairlie Cuning-  
hame.

<sup>51</sup> Lord Granville Gordon.

<sup>52</sup> Lord Westbury.

<sup>49</sup> The Marquis of Queensberry.

<sup>53</sup> Reginald Heygate.

<sup>54</sup> Walter Blake.

Here is a squib on Sir Allen's <sup>55</sup> great Arctic trip,  
 And Reuben Sassoon's very last escapade;  
 A line gives the laugh to Lord Lonsdale's *An Tart ic*  
 trip,  
 Another to *Punch* for not being Phil Mayd.

A column of verse on the Ball at the Pelican,  
 Gives names of the dancers who still take the floor ;  
 For " Fatty " <sup>56</sup> in spite of Boulogne and his belly can,  
 And Dudley <sup>57</sup> and Dunmore <sup>58</sup> are still to the fore.

Archie Drummond for once, a perfect new topper has,  
 And Bloxam <sup>59</sup> and Cooper <sup>60</sup> the surgeons are there,  
 Attending once more the knee Denman Cropper has  
 Managed to slip when performing " A Square."

" Cock and Henley " relates of the doing of anyone—  
 The Clarkes, <sup>61</sup> Percy Cooper, Pot, <sup>62</sup> Cis, <sup>63</sup> Freddy Fane,  
 And records how the day being rather a rainy one  
 " Lady Clare " made all welcome on board her domain.

See how I've lumped them all—just for the jest of it,  
 Making old Henley a frame for the Clarkes ;  
 Charlie that "hammered" Oom Paul and the rest of it,  
 Charlie that steals all our red 'uns for larks.

" A night at the Gaiety "—ah ! what a time we had !  
 Those were the days of old-fashioned Burlesque,  
 When in each line some six puns and a rhyme we had,  
 And Nellie <sup>64</sup> was shapely and Fred <sup>65</sup> was grotesque.

<sup>55</sup> Sir Allen Young.

<sup>56</sup> Stephen Coleman.

<sup>57</sup> The Earl of Dudley.

<sup>58</sup> The Earl of Dunmore.

<sup>59</sup> J. Astley Bloxam.

<sup>60</sup> Alfred Cooper.

<sup>61</sup> Henley and Charles Carlos Clarke.

<sup>62</sup> H. Pottinger Stephens.

<sup>63</sup> Cecil Fane.

<sup>64</sup> Nellie Farren.

<sup>65</sup> Fred Leslie.



The girls on the stage were—well, they were beautiful !

The men in the stalls were most perfectly groomed ;  
We supped at "The Roman's,"<sup>66</sup> and all were most  
dutiful,

We danced where gardenias<sup>67</sup> have never yet bloomed.

Dudley Ward's doing conjuring tricks for the fun of it,  
Paul Monckton and Lehmann<sup>68</sup> are clapping their  
hands;

George Howard is declaring that he will have none of it,  
When offered an option by young Mikey Sandys.<sup>69</sup>

But enough of this fooling, this jesting and jingling,  
You're tired of this cryptical verse, or I'm wrong,  
And I know that your feet, as in old days, are tingling  
To join in a dance and a jolly good song.

Fall in line for the *Pas ae Quatre* sweetly created by  
Eva Greville, Flo Levey, Maud Wilmott, and Price ;<sup>70</sup>  
Our heads and our heels are for ever elated by  
The music of Lutz<sup>71</sup> and the savour of spice.

Sir Arthur,<sup>72</sup> strike up ! Play the opening bar of it !  
The "Gunner"<sup>73</sup> and "Haddocks"<sup>74</sup> and "Loftus"<sup>75</sup>  
and "Swish,"<sup>76</sup>

Already have caught the first notes from afar of it,  
And come as a sign of the general wish.

And Billy Fitzwilliam<sup>77</sup> comes running in, followed by  
Joe Davis and "Cootie,"<sup>78</sup> Dick Burton and "Buck,"<sup>79</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Romano's.

<sup>67</sup> The Gardenia Club.

<sup>68</sup> Capt. Frederick Lehman.

<sup>69</sup> Hon. Michael Sandys.

<sup>70</sup> Miss Lilian Price.

<sup>71</sup> Herr Meyer Lutz.

<sup>72</sup> Sir Arthur Sullivan.

<sup>73</sup> Captain Brown, R.H.A.

<sup>74</sup> Captain Finney.

<sup>75</sup> Loftus Thornhill.

<sup>76</sup> — Broadwood.

<sup>77</sup> Hon. George Fitzwilliam.

<sup>78</sup> General Coote Syngé Hutchinson.  
son.

<sup>79</sup> Hedworth Barclay.

The glasses are full, but the liquor's unswallowed by  
Cecil Mocatta who comes with the ruck.

"Your Grace"<sup>80</sup> and "The Crescent"<sup>81</sup> come leisurely  
walking in,  
"Sussex"<sup>82</sup> and Essex<sup>83</sup> are close to "J.K.";<sup>84</sup>  
While George Vize and Brookfield<sup>85</sup> are arm in arm,  
talking in  
Language that some might mistake for a fray.

Alfred Crocker and Wortham<sup>86</sup> come leisurely strolling  
in,  
Charlie Barrington, Heseltine, Algie Fountaine,  
And Dalton<sup>87</sup> and Hungerford<sup>88</sup> plainly are rolling in—  
Riches—or something from which I abstain.

The music is over, the dance is concluded, and  
As "Swears" boasts he made quite a tenner on  
lunch,  
Peter Crawshay declares that he has not yet blewed it,  
and  
"George" is called in, and "Swears" orders the  
punch :

"George," pour out a glass of old brandy and drop in it  
A pint of champagne of the year '74 ;  
A Liqueur of Curacoa—drop with a flop in it,—  
Maraschino ? a dash in the bowl you may pour !

A bottle of seltzer—the smallest they make of it—  
Of lemon peel one slice, of burrage one leaf,

<sup>80</sup> Sir James Duke.

<sup>81</sup> Sir Philip Egerton.

<sup>82</sup> Sussex Nesbit.

<sup>83</sup> The Earl of Essex.

<sup>84</sup> J. K. Edward.

<sup>85</sup> Charles Brookfield.

<sup>86</sup> Major-General Hale Wortham.

<sup>87</sup> Seymour Portman Dalton.

<sup>88</sup> Henry Hungerford.

A cut of cucumber, 'and when we partake of it  
If we leave but one drain we will add to our grief.' "

And now "Wicked Baronet" <sup>89</sup> while we're awaiting it,  
Summon your courage and all Brother Smuts ;  
Lead with the sword of your sire without stating it,  
The chorus that's known to George Bulteel and  
"Guts." <sup>90</sup>

Come Dan <sup>91</sup> and come Charlie, <sup>92</sup> good Marks and all  
merry men,  
Who came down to see Manifesto last year  
Run first for Grand National, ye are the very men  
To shout in a chorus and send up a cheer.

Good "Guts" send a roar that will ring round each  
rafter, and  
Echo as far as the ears of the Mass ;  
Ah ! you may smile, but I welcome your laughter, and  
Cannot forget when you paid for my gas.

The neighbours may think that our noise is a riot, or  
Dead voices still visit the land of Bow Bells ;  
But "Here's our Proprietor, Good Old Proprietor,"  
And long may we laugh o'er the *Chestnuts* he tells.

#### THE AMORIST.

<sup>89</sup> Sir Thomas Freake.

<sup>90</sup> Baillie Guthrie.

<sup>91</sup> Daniel Marks.

<sup>92</sup> Charles Marks.

## CHAPTER I

Starting the  
Pelican.

IT is commonly supposed by many people that I came into existence at the opening of the Pelican Club in January 1887, but this is not the case. It may be hard of belief, but I was born some years prior to the establishment of that cosy rendezvous, and had considerable experience of life, both rough and smooth, when it opened. Certainly some of my pleasantest times were spent at the Pelican Club, but I do not propose to confine myself to a record of the doings of my members or their proprietor. As the man in *The Belle of New York* remarks, "There are others" calculated to amuse and instruct. Other pens than mine have essayed to describe the foundation of the Pelican Club and the reason for its early closure, and on the principle that lookers-on see most of the game, presumably these gentlemen, who were not, as far as I recollect, members of the Club, and only occasional visitors on sufferance, were right in their surmises as to its establishment and the causes of its downfall.

The true history of the Pelican Club has not yet been written. Some day, perhaps, when I am a little more familiar with the art of bookmaking—I do not mean laying the Favourite and Stiff 'Uns—I will try

and give to the world some of the secret history of the Club which I was so long and fondly associated with, and I think it will make good reading.

We were, when we first started the Pelican, very poor, without much capital, and very extravagant in our outgoings. It was my first experience of club management ; naturally, I knew very little about it, and my partner "Shifter" knew less.

Above all things, we suffered greatly from want of capital ; almost from the start we were handicapped in this respect by the death of our original backer, and the falling away of friends whose promises were like pie-crust. However, we worked very hard to raise the necessary oof, and if not always successful, we were young and hopeful enough to take our disappointments cheerfully.

**A Wasted  
Lunch.**

It has often struck me what a lot of time people waste in not taking ordinary precautions to discover whether the man they wish to interest in a financial scheme is at all likely to enter into their plans. This has occurred to me in thinking over an occasion when "Shifter" and I were in need of funds at the old Pelican Club in Denman Street. We both had fixed upon a young guardsman who was reported to be very wealthy, although at the same time very careful of his money. We asked him to lunch, which was a very prolonged meal, and we did him, and ourselves, extremely well. So much so, that when the dinner-hour arrived, "Shifter" was under the table, I was far from sober, but Billy had not turned a hair. I need hardly say that no business was done, our lunch was wasted, and we had to find another capitalist.

**He Preferred  
a Pass-Book.** Obtaining credit was, of course, one of our greatest aims, and at times I discovered a great shyness on the part of tradesmen to give the necessary trust. One wine merchant I thought I had persuaded into giving me tick, and was showing him over our cellars. He appeared very pleased, and going up to the bar to have a final drink before taking my order, remarked, "You have shown me some very nice cellars, Mr Wells, but you haven't let me see your pass-book."

**Collecting  
Subscriptions** During the existence of the Pelican Club, it had the advantage of the services of various secretaries, foremost among them being Shirley Brooks (Blobbs), Cecil Raleigh (Sir Walter), and Somerset Calthorpe. Possibly neither of these was a perfect club secretary, never having had any training for such an office, but all of them were the best of fellows, and extremely popular with the members. Of course the accounts and books were always carefully audited at various times, but prior to such things as subscriptions being entered in the proper books, they were usually taken care of by the secretary. On one occasion I remember poor Shirley and the Major (Major Robert Hope-Johnstone), who occupied the same room, waking up one morning and seeing a pile of sovereigns on the former's dressing-table. So much money was an unusual sight, and they determined to spend the day—and the money—in a jaunt to Richmond. Luckily for my treasury, I came into the room and reminded them that very late over night, or rather, early the same morning, several members had weighed in with their subscriptions, which accounted

for the gold on the dressing-table. They lost their day's outing, but I saved my money. In reality I was a great protector of my members. The majority of them were young men of considerable means or expectations, new to London life, and many were what are described as "Gilded Mugs"; most of the sharps in London knew of their existence and had marked them down as their own. It was my earnest endeavour to protect these young gentlemen as if they had been my own kith and kin.

**Arbitration  
Made Easy**

When "Shifter" and I agreed to terminate our partnership, there was some difference of opinion as to what sum I should pay him to retire. Arbitration was suggested, and some mutual friends, including "Ballyhooley" Martin and John Corlett, kindly acted as arbitrators. They came to the conclusion that if I paid my retiring partner the sum of £500, I should be behaving very generously. This sum I obtained, and at a dinner shortly afterwards, at which "Shifter," myself, and a lady friend of his were present, I produced the £500 in notes, and handed them to him. Later in the evening, the lady, with the caution of her sex, remarked to "Shifter," "Now, Willie dear, don't go about to-night with all that money in your pocket." After some demur he agreed to let her take charge of half of it, and it amused me to see him counting out a fiver to himself and a fiver to her over the restaurant table. "Shifter" and I spent the remainder of the evening together, and the lady retired to more safely dispose of the bank notes he had given her. On returning to his home, very late I am afraid, he discovered a note on the pin-cushion on his dressing-table; it was to the usual effect, that

she had left him for ever. As a matter of fact she went to Liverpool, where she married somebody else, but she might have had the grace to have left "Shifter's" notes behind.

*Moral*.:—Joint Stock Banks are often safer for bank notes than inside a lady's stays.

That past master of spoof, Arthur Roberts, was always in great form at the Club. One year we had as an honorary member the Grand Duke Paul of Mecklenburg, whose proposer had asked us to see that he was duly looked after and given a proper idea of an English Bohemian Club. Arthur Roberts was introduced to him—under what name I forget—and he, with the two Macs, who were then performing at some music hall, showed the Duke how to play "hunt the slipper," and initiated him into the game of "spoof." Speaking of Arthur Roberts reminds me that he was very amusing in the card-room. Once at nap the player put down the ace. "I beat you by one pip," said Arthur, putting down the deuce, and the other member, who was a very young man, deferred to Arthur's superior wisdom.

Arthur, like many other prominent actors, occasionally had a benefit, and on one occasion, having purchased a box at the theatre where it took place, I went there and was shown into it. Presently a party came along who also claimed to have purchased it, and I was moved to the stalls. Again I was turned out of my seat by some one else who claimed it, and in despair I sought Roberts behind the scenes. In reply to my very natural complaint, he said, "Never mind, my boy, you shall have a box; be a juryman in



*Trial by Jury.*" I sat out the rest of that afternoon on the stage.

More of  
Arthur Roberts. Roberts was never at a loss for a retort. Years ago, when poor Farnie was alive and stage managing at the Avenue, he called for rehearsal the late Miss Wadman, Henry Bracy, and Arthur Roberts. They all came late, Roberts last and latest of all. Farnie, in his broad Scotch, was blowing up the two first comers when Arthur Roberts arrived, and he turned the torrent of his wrath upon him, and said he was the worst of the three. "Here is Wadman an hour behind time, then Bracy, and now you last of all. What am I to do with you?" "Why," replied Roberts, "back me for a place, you old juggins."

On another occasion Arthur Roberts had promised to take the chair at one of the Pelican Club concerts. He arrived very late, so late, in fact, that my members were getting impatient at the delay in the commencement of the evening's amusement. At last Roberts arrived, and mounting the platform, he advanced to the front of it, and in tones usually used by Royal chairmen at banquets, he announced, "Gentlemen, you may smoke." Of course there was a roar of laughter, and we proceeded with a very successful concert.

A Pelican  
Dance. Concerts in the Club-house were not the only form of amusement I provided my members with. We occasionally gave dances. At one of these the band became rather obstreperous, the cause of their annoyance being that my man George, who was in charge of the buffet where the cigars were given out, declined to

provide the musicians with weeds which cost me two shillings apiece. The orchestra were not content with ordinary sixpenny smokes, and one of them proceeded to attack George. My man was always very good with his fists, and before any one could interfere he had given the first violin, or whatever he was, a sound drubbing, and then proceeded to lay out the big basoon and others in the band. Had not some of the committee rushed in and interfered, there probably would have been no more dancing that night, for quite three of the performers were *hors-de-combat*.

**Pelican  
Cricket.**

In the early days of the Pelican also, we started a cricket club, and a very strong team we had—when they turned up. As, however, the hours usually kept by my members were very bad ones, they were not early risers. If only we could have played our matches after dinner, I am quite sure the cricket club would have flourished, and probably been in existence now.

On one occasion we got up a match at Twickenham with a club, mainly consisting of young gentlemen living with a crammer, a clergyman. As it happened, the day fixed for the match was after a more than usually late night at the Club, the late Lord de Clifford having entertained several of Buffalo Bill's braves to a supper which lasted until breakfast time, and as a consequence only "Shifter" and myself turned up at the hour appointed at the railway station. We thought that the rest of the eleven might possibly come by the next train, and we meanwhile went on to make the best excuses we could. When we arrived at the field we found not a soul of our great team

there. It was a very awkward position, but we had to make the best of it. The other team were all there in charge of their tutor, and as the time went on and none of our fellows turned up, I suggested to our opponents that perhaps it would be as well if we lunched first. This was done, and the meal was prolonged as much as it could be by drinking one another's healths in shandy-gaff. This could not go on for ever, and the other cricketers were evidently beginning to think that we were a fraud. Just then two of our eleven turned up, the Honourable Dan and the Honourable Clem Finch, and "Shifter" was then struck with the happy thought of asking the reverend gentleman in charge of the Home team whether he could lend us some cricketers, just to make a match of it. This he very kindly did, having some of his second eleven available, and to our great joy we put all his eleven out for a very few runs. This I afterwards found out was owing to the fact that one of the players we had borrowed had bowled at Eton. Then in went the so-called Pelican eleven, and by the aid of time we just managed to win the match.

I need hardly say that the full, true, and particular account of this appeared in the next number of the *Sporting Times*.

Another cricket match engaged in by the "Pelicans" was at Barnes, at a club then in existence called the "Sporting and Dramatic," of which Lord Charles Kerr and "Fatty" Coleman were leading lights. The house and grounds had once been the residence of a Lord Lonsdale. It was a convenient distance from town, and Lord Charles Kerr used to drive a coach there from Hatchett's. Later I believe the house was occupied by the Lyric

Club. "The Sporting and Dramatic" was not, however, as "toney" a club as the old Lyric, but the members were a very cheery lot, and lavish in their hospitality to a number of young ladies principally in thinking parts at the Gaiety Theatre. Our team for this match included, as far as I remember, "Shifter," Joe Hornsby, who was captain, Arthur Kemp, "Bally-hooley" Martin, Shirley Brooks, Arthur Roberts, and myself, and a member we nicknamed "the Honourable Paul Northbank" was our umpire. "Dicky the Driver" drove us down on his coach, and our appearance at Barnes evidently gave the "Sporting and Dramatic" members the impression that we were a team of clown cricketers, and that they were in for a spoof match. This match we won also, owing greatly to the erratic ruling of our umpire : which reminds me of an old cricket chestnut about a Scotch umpire. The match was played at Glasgie, and the batsman would rush out at lobs ; at last the wicket-keeper nailed the ball and sent the bails flying in the air. "How's that?" he shouted triumphantly. "Eh, mon," replied the disgusted umpire, "it's oot, but it's a dirty low trick, an' I shall give it nae oot."

How  
Wuffalo Will  
paid his  
Subscription.

Some of my members in the old days were very impecunious, and their subscriptions were not always paid as promptly as they might have been—not that this was exceptional in the matter of the Pelican Club, because many other institutions have an equal difficulty in getting their members to pay up. At one time, however, so slow were members in paying their annual subscriptions that my secretary had to put up a notice to the

effect that no member whose subscription remained unpaid should use the Club. I must confess I had some trouble to induce the committee to agree to this, as some of them were afraid that it would be enforced against themselves. A day or two after the notice had been exhibited, a well-known journalist, now no more, was leisurely ascending the Club stairs, when the Secretary went up to him and drew his attention to the notice.

"Is Mr Wells in?" he queried.

"Yes."

"Well, will you bring down my receipt and I will pay you?"

He then came up to me and said:—

"Could you oblige me with the loan of a fiver for a few minutes? I have just sent to Fleet Street for one, it will be here immediately, when I will pay you back."

It was with my five pounds he paid his subscription, and I have never seen it since.

The game of spoof, of course, did not originate at the Pelican Club, but it certainly was greatly elaborated, and at times much appreciated by the members, always excepting the member who was being spoofed.

**An Elaborate Game of Spoof.** "Haw! How do, 'Swears'?" said "Drinking Horn," one of two brothers, members, who were respectively named "Hunting Horn" and "Drinking Horn," entering the Club on an evening that came to be historic. "Hev' a light, old man?"

So saying, he flung at me, in cheerful Pelican style, a fairly heavy receptacle for matches, which hit me but did not hurt.

I uttered an agonised "Hoop!" fell right back, and lay groaning on the floor.

"Keep it up," whispered Clem Finch.

"Good Gawd! Good Gawd!" cried my assailant, "what have I done?"

"What have you done," said Finch, "you cowardly brute you, you have injured poor old proprietor, perhaps disfigured him for life!"

I lay doubled up, and poor Hughie Drummond and Dick Burton carried me carefully into the stranger's room.

"Now," said they, "we must have some (adjective) fun."

I pretended to be very ill, and when Horne was allowed to see me, my face was white (with flour), and blood (beetroot) lay on my temples.

"My Gawd! my Gawd!" cried Horne distractedly. "Pore fellow, pore fellow. Send for a doctor. A doctor must be got."

Johnny Crook arrived in the nick of time; he was impressed into our service as the doctor, as Horne did not know him.

"My Gawd! my Gawd!" said Horne excitedly to a waiter while the doctor was with me, "is he all right?"

"Don't know, sir, the doctor's with him now, sir."

"You have done a very foolish thing," said Lord de Clifford. "This practical joking often has the saddest of sad results."

Out they brought "Doctor" Crook. He would call again at 4 A.M., and all that could be done in the meantime was to keep ice on my head and elsewhere, and keep me very quiet—no noise or anything.

By this time I had slipped out of a side door.

"Good Gawd!" said Horne, not recognising the "doctor," "what do you think of him?"

"Very, very serious, sir. I will call to-morrow morning. Everything depends on quietness. I must be off."

"Just a minute. How much—How much is it?"

"At this hour my fee will be ten guineas."

"Take two guineas on account."

"Well—all right."

"What can I do? I'll do anything."

It was agreed to close the Club.

"Horne," they said, "you have done quite enough mischief, you had better go home."

Horne, whose excitement grew, volunteered to sit up with the "pore fellow" all night, and protested that it was unintentional.

"Unintentional be hanged!" said Dan Finch. "Go home, and pray for his recovery."

Ernest gone, we made his two quid fly in brandies and sodas, the sick man freely participating.

Next day: enter Hughie Drummond.

"Well, how are you, old man?"

"How ought I to be?" I asked.

"Bad: you must be very bad indeed."

He then went down and interviewed Horne.

"How is the pore fellow?" asked Horne, anxiety on every line of his face.

"Bad, very bad. It is a sad and silly thing, this practical joking, and must be put a stop to. You are a strong muscular fellow, you know,"—Horne brightened up—"and it came with powerful and disastrous effects upon poor 'Swears,' you know."

"What can I do for the pore old boy?"

"Game, salmon, and the best champagne. He must have the best; it is no ordinary case."

"Anything, anything — send for anything. How would fine cigars do?"

"Excellent, and don't forget the Pommery."

"But, my boy, I have to leave for Scotland to-night. Can I not see our proprietor, our pore old proprietor? Do you think he is all right for money?"

"If you like," said Drummond meditatively, "you can give me £50—or say £60—to go on with."

"Anything."

We got the cash, the birds, and the champagne, and had a high old time, but when "Bally-hooley" came out with "the finest game of spoof that ever was played," in the usual quarter, the game seemed up, but Horne declined to believe he had been spoofed.

"Not so," said he. "I did 'Swears' a great injury—a great injury. No bally spoof this time."

He preferred to take it that way.



## CHAPTER II

### **Selling a Pony and Cart.**

SPOOF and cricket were not the only pastimes indulged in by the "Pelicans." Some of them fancied they were good judges of that noble animal the horse, and besides backing him occasionally, did a little business with their proprietor, in which the latter did not always come off the worst. In horse-dealing, as in many other avocations, there is no friendship, and a man of the strictest rectitude in every relation of life would not hesitate to deceive his own mother to get the best of a deal in horse flesh. One of my members, an old friend, happened to say that he had a little chestnut pony to dispose of. It was, of course, a paragon, an equine wonder which could do anything: quiet to ride or drive, had won a race, was up to my weight—no light one—and all for thirty pounds. As a club proprietor, of course, I should have given all my time to business and put aside the thought of driving a pony and cart about, but somehow the idea of such a cheap animal fascinated me, and I consulted "Shifter." He was equally keen about the pony, so I said to the owner that he had better wire for the gee to be sent to town so that we might have a look at it.

"Not much wiring wanted," said he; "it's at King's Cross now."

Up came the pony, which we stabled in Bell Yard, close to the Club.

"Now," said "Shifter," "we've got the pony ; what are we going to do?"

"Get a cart," said I, "on the hire system, the three years' system, provided the horse lasts long enough."

This I secured at a maker's in Bond Street, three guineas down. The harness was obtained on similar terms, a sovereign in advance, and the balance at so much per month. "Shifter" purchased a whip, and so we had now the pony, cart, harness, and whip ; it was obvious that we must go for a drive.

At the Club there was much stir among the members when our turn-out came to the door, and the question much discussed was, Who was to drive? "Shifter" or I? "Shifter" said he had had great experience.

"In being driven to Holloway," I added.

Off we went, "Shifter" driving, down Denman Street, and all went well ; but just as we approached the corner, the pony raised its head, and shoving its feet into the ground, stood stock still, nearly throwing us out, and no amount of inducement from "Shifter's" whip would persuade him to move.

"I told you you couldn't drive," said I.

"Shifter" admitted he didn't know exactly what was the matter.

Out we jumped.

"Poor beast—got the staggers," shouted one of a group of unfeeling cabbies.

"You drive now," said "Shifter."

"Not much," replied I, and as my companion had had enough, we gave a man two bob to lead the beast back to the stables.

"We have had a bad deal," said I sorrowfully. "He has done us. We must sell it to somebody else." And it was arranged that "Bessie" should be offered this lot, this nice-looking lot. Now Bessie was fully wide, and quite a judge in dealing in horses.

Peter "Blobbs" was gathered into our confidence. I said, "You get Bessie up to your place in Henrietta Street with a few friends to tea, and I'll drop in." "Shifter" was to lead the brute to Henrietta Street and then drive up to the house.

It was an anxious time for me in the afternoon of the day fixed upon. Bessie seemed desirous to be going.

Just about two or three minutes to four, "Shifter," in the cart and driving nicely, turned the corner, on which I had been keeping an anxious eye.

"Oh!" said I in surprise, "here's 'Shifter.'"

"Where?"

"My eye," I said, "and what a nice pony cart. I wonder where he got it from"

He dismounted, put a cloth on the pony's back, and came upstairs.

"Where," I asked him, "did you get that nice turn-out?"

"Oh!" said he, "it belongs to a friend of mine, it's not mine; he wants to sell it. Very hard up. I thought I would drive it round and see why you and I shouldn't buy it."

"Ah, well," I replied, "well, you see we have only just started this Club."

Bessie suggested she should go down and have a drive in it.

"You can't drive," said I.

That fixed her resolution, and having put on her hat, she got on board.

The moment had come. Off the pony started up the street. Breathless suspense on the part of "Shifter" and myself. But it was all right, it turned out beautifully.

"This looks like going all right," we murmured.

Then when Bessie returned, "Shifter" remarked, "You drive very well; what do you think, 'Swears'?"

"What do they want for it?" I asked.

"Oh, not much," said he; "£40 for the pony, and £30 for the cart, and £15 for the harness."

"Damned cheap lot," said Peter, examining the fetlocks, etc., with a professional air.

"I don't think, however," said I, "we had better buy it. It should be put up for auction"

"I've a good mind to buy it myself," chipped in Bessie, to the unqualified delight of the nefarious "Shifter" and myself. "Do you think he'd take £80 for the lot?"

"Shifter" hesitated, but said he might.

Bessie thought it would be a good investment. It would suit her nicely to drive to and from the halls in her own turn-out.

I whispered to "Shifter" that we must cop the oof ready, "Shifter" understanding old Syriac.

So said "Shifter," "If you're going to buy you must give me a cheque to hand the man."

The lady wrote out a cheque for £80, and bought the pony and cart.

"Shifter" took the cheque with characteristic caution, and remarked casually, "Well, I must be going." Thought I, so must I. I knew "Shifter."

Peter drove with Bessie, and "Shifter" and I in-

dulged in the usual game of cutting up the stakes. So much for cart, so much for pony, so much for harness, and £40 between us.

A couple of days later "Shifter" came into the Club looking miserable. Drawing me into a corner, he said, "You've done a nice thing. You know that pony and cart? Well, the darned beast has done with her exactly what it did with us. She lost her turn at the Metropolitan, and I'm blest if I know what's going to happen."

"I'll go round and see the lady," said I; and off I went to Henrietta Street, where the capacious vials of Bessie's superfine original wrath were emptied upon poor, harmless me.

"My dear girl," I protested soothingly, "you know I told you not to buy it. What does 'Shifter' know about a horse or a cart, for that matter?"

"What am I to do?" she exclaimed.

"Well, you know, I *really* can't advise you; buying a pony and selling a pony are two distinctly different things."

"Will you buy it?" asked she—a stroke of genius. "Will you give me £60 for it?"

"But the cart has been used, and you tell me the horse won't go. What's the use of it to me?"

We argued and debated, and in the upshot I bought the whole show back for £25, and took the pony back to its old quarters. To "Shifter" I remarked *re* the whole business "not a word."

By-and-bye Charlie Harris entered the Club.

We talked, and I had the same old pony and the same old cart brought round. We were not quite done with them yet.

"That's a damn nice lot," quoth Charlie.

"Rather."

"Where did you get it?"

"We bought it, but I don't know that we want it."

"Would you sell it?" he asked eagerly. The hook was being approached.

"All very fine to sell a pony, cart, and harness; but we want the ready."

"No credit for me," said he, "I can buy it ready. I want it for my old woman who's going down to air herself at Margate. Do for her to drive about in. It will square her. What will you take?"

"£100."

"Rubbish. It's not worth it. £70, and I'll give you the quids?"

We closed.

The pony was sent to Margate to his wife.

Not many days elapsed before he received this wire in town from the lady:—

"Drove pony over to Broadstairs; it tried to jump a wall, and the whole show is smashed. Will you come down?"

Our success in dodging him for the next few weeks was a most remarkable feat of its kind.

An  
Absent-minded  
Artist.

It was very curious how membership of the old Pelican Club induced absent-mindedness. I am not speaking of the neglect of payment of subscriptions by some of the members, the difficulties in collecting, which might form a chapter in the life experiences of the Official Receiver in the Bankruptcy Court. I allude more to the fact that when my members once were inside the Club doors, they were oblivious of everything outside. One of our most popular

members was an artist, who is now deservedly at the top of the tree in the black and white line. His usual form of exercise was riding a horse, and knowing this, many of the livery stable-keepers and horse-dealers of Kensington used to lend him their animals for the sake of exercise, as well as paying him a slight compliment to his genius. One day one of these worthies lent him a hack, which the artist, after a turn round the park, finally rode down to the Club, telling the hall porter to look after his gee. He came into the Club and entirely forgot about the poor horse outside. First of all one member interested him with a story, then another would stand drinks, another cigars, and finally he dined there, and I am not sure that he did not also sup. When he left the Club it was by way of a cab home, probably in the early hours of the following morning. Next day the livery stable-keeper went round to his house in great concern as to the whereabouts of the animal he had lent him the previous day. Until that moment the artist had entirely forgotten the existence of the horse. He then tore down to the Club, and inquired of the hall porter what had become of his steed. He was informed that after letting a loafer walk him about for six hours he had given him half-a-crown to take him to Aldridge's, where, eventually, the missing animal was recovered.

Members'  
Wives.

At the Pelican Club one among the many hall porters we had was a gem in his way. He never knew anything as to the whereabouts of the members, whether he was being cross-examined by a dun, or pleaded with by a lady in search of an absent lover or husband. Sometimes, of course, he made a mistake,

as, for instance, when a member who had been taking his wife and sister out to the theatre was dropped at the Club by them on their way home. On arriving at their residence the wife found that she had lost the front door key, or else her husband had it, and she and her sister immediately returned to the Club in search of the necessary key. She was a very pretty woman, far prettier than the majority of wives are, and when she arrived at the entrance to the Pelican, and bending out of the cab informed the hall porter that she was Mr So-and-so's wife, whom, she knew, was inside, and she wished to see him, it was not surprising that the janitor replied that he did not know whether the inquired-for member was in the Club.

"But," remonstrated the lady, "he is my husband."

"Ah, m'am," said the hall porter with a grin, "that's what they all say."

The poor woman, finding all her efforts in vain to soften the heart of the hall porter, at last drove away with the prospect of waiting outside her dwelling-house for many hours before her spouse returned. Evidently, however, the hall porter had informed her husband of her visit, for within a few minutes of her arrival home he turned up with the missing key.



### CHAPTER III

A Pelican  
Henley.

NATURALLY, Bohemian Clubs, like theatres, are not so much patronised in summer as in winter, and during the hot weather, with Henley approaching, business was slack. It was my first year of Club management, and I had not then grasped the fact that if my members were athirst, it would be more profitable that they should quench their desire for drink inside my Club-house than elsewhere. I was new to the business, and foolishly lent my ear to the suggestions of those who saw their way to getting a week at Henley on the nod. So it was determined that the "Pelicans" should have a nest at Henley, and as I was a man who knew nothing at all about houseboats, I went down with a friend to see a hard-up gent at Hampton Court, who had a houseboat, which, it was thought, he might be willing to let us have on reasonable terms for the week. It was a very fine commodious houseboat, as far as I could judge, and I fixed the matter at his figure—£40 for the week—while for an extra tenner he agreed to take the boat to Henley and get for it a front row position, so to speak. At the Club we fixed up a notice :—

## "PELICAN CLUB

"Members are informed that there will be a Houseboat at Henley for their use, the charge for which will be One Guinea a day. Drinks Extra."

I made all the arrangements—secured flowers, a nigger band, and all the customary trimmings—and down we went, a jolly and giddy band, to take possession. We found everything spick and span, and a better equipped houseboat was not on the river. Depend upon it we did not omit the American bar, without which no Henley houseboat is complete; nor to see to it that the sending of the food from town was attended to in the best style.

Tuesday morning found my secretary on board ready to receive our guests. Most of them brought their female belongings, and a finer looking lot of girls it has never been my luck to see. Consequently our houseboat was popular, and many were the visits paid and repaid by and to other neighbouring boats. And we were very knowing too, quite aquatic, and made the course ring with cries of "Well rowed, Jones!" "Bravo, Christchurch!" "Go it, Trinity!" and all the rest of them; and a gay time generally, including nights, which we spent at a fine and large gilt-edged house at Henley, taken by us for the week. The incidents of the sojourn were many, and if related in full, would suffice in themselves to fill this volume; but for the benefit of piscatorial authorities, as well as anglers, I must mention the case of the six-pound Thames trout that leaped right out of the river into a punt, in which were some members, including Peter "Blobbs" and "Shifter."

We promptly seized the fish, killed and cooked

him, which we certainly ought not to have done ; far better to have had him stuffed and put in glass for exhibition at the Club, with the inscription :—

“Caught with fly on the Thames by the Proprietor.”

Then there was the upsetting of the punt one fine morning by some unaccountable means (which I now understand ; little did I fancy then that the entertainment had been organised solely for my benefit) ; and the whole of us were thrown splash into the pellucid Thames. Thank goodness I can swim, but had it not been for one of my companions in misery, I verily believe that my water-logged clothes would have succeeded in dragging me to the river bed, and so ending my experience of Henley.

This was not the only dip that occurred. One afternoon, one of our members with an actress wife had a tiff with her on account of—well, the usual reason. “‘Swears,’” said he, “I’ll teach her a lesson she won’t forget in a hurry.” With that he went up to her, and said solemnly, “I see you have grown tired of me ; good-bye, old girl. ‘Swears,’ you have been a good old proprietor to me, good-bye,” and with these words he leaped from the houseboat into the river. There was a great scene, screaming women, excited men, punts dodging around, but no sign of the would-be suicide till he was observed on the opposite bank, performing for our edification the pre-Adamite thumb-and-nose signal. Told of his safety, his fainting wife recovered, and was indignant when we suggested that it was on account of his danger that she swooned away. “Not so,” said she. “It was due to anxiety as to what I had done with the receipt for the premium on his Insurance policy.”

Nor did the dips end with this. Our worthy

secretary had a money bag slung about him in bookie style, and it was a very heavy bag, for the American bar was extraordinarily popular, and one day, bag and all, he fell head over heels into the tide.

"Good God!" cried my man George, "he's off, and the oof too!" and with that he bravely dived after the poor secretary. Humane Society medal for this, thought I. But in a minute faithful George rose to the surface and triumphantly held the bag on high.

"Thank God, guv'nor," he said, "we've saved the oof."

"Where's C.?" I yelled.

"Oh, I—I—forgot about him," responded George. But C. was safe, he could swim like an Aylesbury duck, and we fished him out none the worse for his immersion.

On the morning of the last day of  
**Marlow to** Henley, Charley Thompson, one of the  
**follow.** gamest men on horseback, or at putting  
his fives up, came to me and said:—

"‘Swears,’ Marlow regatta is to-morrow; why don't you take the houseboat down there?"

"I can't do it," I said, "we have only got it for the week."

"Week be hanged," said he. "I've got a launch and I'll tow you down to Marlow."

I explained that the owner of the boat was coming up on the morrow to take possession.

"Let him come," said Charley. "If he's a fat man the walk to Marlow will take off some of his weight."

And we went to Marlow, and a great trip it was, including the great cockatoo rescue.

This cockatoo belonged to Charley, and it could

say or do anything in this world—so I had been told. We were passing through a lock, when suddenly off flew Charley's cockatoo, alighting right on the top of the lock-keeper's house. Out came the lock-keeper, who promptly noticed the cause of our gesticulations and cries.

Said he with vigour:—"You don't get that bird, you don't get near it, until you pay me what you owe me, Mr Thompson, for breaking my windows and shooting my fowls—£4, 10s. This is the first time I have had an opportunity of seeing you since."

Our persuasive eloquence availed nothing, either on man or bird, and as the latter got dangerously near the former's chimney, we saw that something must be done, and that at once.

"What are we to do?" asked Charley Thompson of me, and we withdrew for a council of war. "I wouldn't take £100 for the cockatoo, and I'll never pay this old wretch a single bob. I'm not responsible for what my boy does, am I?"

"I have an idea," I said. "Go up to his house and ask him for pen, ink and paper, and write him out a cheque on your bank. Then before he has time to cash the cheque wire to the bank to stop it."

"Good idea," said he.

"Be civil to him," I added, as he jumped on shore and walked towards the door.

"Look here," said he to the lock-keeper, "it is your turn to-day, it was mine the other day. Come in and I'll pay you."

"No larks," said the lock-keeper.

"No larks," said Charley, and having given him the cheque, the bird was duly rescued and given in exchange.

I do not know if Charley has ever met the lock-keeper since.

Marlow was reached all right, and towards the close of the day, who should we be boarded by but the irritable owner of the boat.

"Keep cool," whispered Charley.

On came the proprietor, and denounced me for this, that, and the other thing. I had broken my contract; he had wanted to stay at Henley, he would have the law against me, and he would—and he would—I'm blest if I remember what he wouldn't do to me.

But I had tact. I said, I understood the boat had to be delivered on Saturday, but no place was mentioned in the agreement, and didn't he get my wire? Didn't he get my message from the boatman, telling him we had gone to Marlow (and would be delighted to meet him and entertain him for the day), as Marlow was nearer Hampton Court than Henley was.

He had observed the athletic frames of my friends around, and simmered down, in fact, became very genial, and an hilariously happy evening, in which he took no inconsiderable part, ended a very happy week at Henley.

Hughie's  
Socks.      Speaking of my man George, who  
is still in my employ, he once made  
a very neat retort to poor Hughie  
Drummond. In the old days of the Pelican very  
often members who came to town for a night or  
two, or for some reason were later at the Club than  
usual, and could not get a room there, frequently  
went home to my flat in Oxford Street. Hughie  
Drummond was one of my most frequent visitors.  
He was very erratic about his wardrobe, and was always  
under the impression that he brought new clothes into

my flat and took out old ones, and in consequence he frequently had little skirmishes with my servant, and one morning when his bag was being packed up, Hughie said :—

“Don’t forget to put in my socks.”

“Socks, do you call them !” replied George. “All I can see is a pair of mittens.”

Hughie had a distinct sense of humour, and very seldom failed to get home upon anyone who tried to have the best of him. He was starting from a railway station and the train seemed very full, one compartment especially seemed to have a handbag or portmanteau on every seat ; however, Hughie was not to be defeated, so, in spite of the remonstrances of the only occupant of the carriage, who said that the owner of the bag would be back shortly, he cleared one of the seats and sat himself down. No owner of the bag arrived, and finally the train began to move away without him, upon which Hughie exclaimed, “Your friend has lost his train, I’m hanged if he shall lose his luggage,” and he pitched the offending bag out of the window.

As, of course, the bag was the property of the other gentleman who had been greedy enough to monopolise all the seats, his indignation may be better imagined than described, but Hughie certainly scored.

This reminds me of another story about railway travelling, in which Hughie was the leading spirit.

Hughie’s  
Lunatic.

Our compartment was full, one stranger only being present, so that his being with

us, as he was a non-smoker, kept us from enjoying our tobacco, while we could not talk as freely as if he had not been there. At one of the stations we stopped at for some little time, the stranger got out, as did Hughie, who went up to him, and very confidentially informed him that the man in the corner was an escaped lunatic whom they were taking back to Hanwell, and hoped that he was not nervous. The stranger evidently was, for not only did he tip Hughie, as the keeper, half-a-crown for his information, but he immediately removed his belongings to another compartment, and left us free to enjoy the joke.

How we all laughed, too, one night  
**Montie and** in the good old times when Montie  
**the Cabman.** was taken in by the cabman. It was  
a raw and gusty night, and he came into the Club cold and dripping from Romanos' to have a drop of the stuff that won Bannockburn for the other people. After him, at a brief interval, came the hall porter, followed by the cabman. "Beggin' yer pardon, sir," said the latter, "but 'aven't you made a mistake?" and he showed in his hand what appeared to be a sovereign.

"Oh, so I have," said Montie, taking the coin; "here's a half-a-crown for you; what'll you have?"

Later said Montie proudly to me:—"There's an honest man for you. What'll you have, old chap?"

But when he tendered the yellow one in payment, the barman politely but firmly told him that they didn't take Hanover Jacks at the Pelican Club.



## CHAPTER IV

### **A Runaway Marriage.**

WE had no penal laws in the rules of the Pelican Club fining any of the members who married, as at the Bachelors' Club, but as a fact not many of my members who were single ever did marry as long as they remained Pelicans; the majority of them were misogynists without being in any sense misogynists. Probably also all the comforts of home with which the Pelican provided them did not make them long for wedded bliss, and I know the Club was not popular with some of the wives of my married members. Consequently the one or two rare matrimonial alliances were celebrated with due solemnity, more like a wake than a wedding feast, and one runaway match may be worth chronicling.

"‘Swears,’ I am in love with my cousin," earnestly remarked a great friend of mine, in the old Pink 'Un office in Fleet Street, one day. "What am I to do?"

"Well," said I, "old man, if she's in love with you, marry the girl."

"That's just it," said he; "my parents won't have it on any account, and her parents won't have it on my account, because we're cousins; they don't believe in cousins marrying. But I will marry her. I love her, and she loves me. I'll take your advice."

"All right."

"No, it isn't all right. I want to marry her, and it is necessary we should have two witnesses who have lived in Edinburgh at least two months, to make the marriage valid. Will *you* be a witness, and can you find another? 'Swears,' when my father dies I shall be rich; if I marry my cousin, I shall be rich *now*. Can I depend upon you?"

"You can," said I. "When do you want me?"

"This is Friday, and I want you in Edinburgh on Monday morning to meet the train that comes from Glasgow, and we will go straight to the Sheriff's office, and be married right off. If you do it I will never forget you. We shall have a good breakfast."

"That breakfast is mine, old man," said I, "if I live." Then I bethought myself of my little friend "Shifter," and wired for him.

"Willie," said I, "what are you doing between Saturday and Monday?"

"Nothing on Saturday, but I lunch at Romano's on Sunday, and drop into the Pelican later on."

"Look here," I said, "there is no boxing at the Pelican on Sunday night, so I want you to go for a nice little trip with me, and you will be back in London on Monday night at twelve o'clock."

"Right; where do you want me to go?"

"Scotland. Do what you like on Saturday night, but on Sunday you give yourself to me until Monday night."

"Certainly,—Swears," said he.

On Sunday morning it was with difficulty I roused "Shifter" from slumber at the Club, where he was snoring loud enough to wake the whole of Covent

Garden Market, and got him to King's Cross, where I took two first-class returns to the North.

I unfolded to him the details of our journey.

"Edinburgh's no good," he said. "No clothes, no anything. I shall die of cold."

"I'll buy you a rug." And with much persuasion and a coffee varnish, I got him into a Pullman, and away we went.

"Well," he remarked, "Edinburgh. What is it? Mary Queen of Scots? Holyrood? Blessed if I'll contemplate the painted blood stains of the defunct Lothario Mons. Rizzio. Kilts is it, or bagpipes? or haggis? Hoots mon! What by all that's tartan and tough do you want me to do in the true and tender?"

Then aha! I told him *all*.

"If they are married all right," I replied, "I'll give you a pony for your trouble. But," I said with a brave show of legal knowledge, "the laws of Scotland, 'Shifter,' are very different from the laws of England, though the whisky in each country is the same. In Scotland a witness to a marriage must have lived in the place of the marriage a certain time—a great thing—you have got to say you have lived in Edinburgh three months."

"If they ask me where?"

"Look in the 'A.B.C.,' find a hotel, and say you lived there."

"But 't-t-would be telling a lie!"

"Yes," said I, "so it would, but I don't think we are going to stick at lies."

Punctual at 9 A.M. on the Monday morning the Glasgow train rolled into the Edinburgh station, and I was introduced to the blooming bride, and "Shifter" to the bride and bridegroom.

In two carriages—I with the bride and her sister: “Shifter” with the bridegroom—we arrived at the Sheriff’s Court, and were shown into the Sheriff’s private room.

The Sheriff gave an expression of surprise when he saw the couple; they were each well known to him.

“I have come to be married,” said the victim, “and I have brought my witnesses with me.”

The marriage duly took place, and “Shifter”—rest his bones!—acted nobly.

“How long have you lived in Edinburgh?” the Sheriff asked him.

“Fourteen years,” replied “Shifter” promptly.

He meant to be safe.

On the way to Balmoral the bride was on my arm, while “Shifter” looked after the sister.

The bride wept bitterly. I looked the poor girl up and down, and assured her she had nothing to cry for, but so far as I could observe—and I am a trained observer—a good deal to be thankful for.

We had a merry breakfast, and many toasts—the bride, the bridegroom, and the bridesmaid—the bride’s sister—who gamely responded on her own behalf.

Then we went our several ways—the “happy couple” on their honeymoon, “Shifter” and I back to London.

In the train I could see that “Shifter” had something to say. After a few preliminaries:

“Good-looking girl the sister,” he remarked tentatively.”

“Yes.”

“Much money in the family?” he asked casually.

“I think the bride has £20,000. I think the sister has £20,000.”

Said he gravely, “‘Swears,’ you have known me

for many years. I have always told you the truth. She seemed partial to me, don't you think so?"

"Yes."

"Lucky man to marry the girl."

"What a time we could have on £20,000."

Said he, coming close to me, "Can I trust you with a terrible secret?"

I said, "'Shifter,' you can—my hand upon it."

"'Swears,'" he whispered hoarsely, "I am really not married."

In the early days of Romano's some  
**The Biter Bit.** of the impecunious patrons were allowed to run a score with the proprietor, or more correctly speaking, with the head waiter of the period. The payment of these accounts was frequently avoided by the debtors, and the waiter often had to resort to subterfuge to obtain his money. On one occasion, four of us were lunching at the restaurant, and all very hard up. After the meal was over it was proposed that we should toss up as to who should pay. When the coins had been spun and the matter settled, the loser turned to me, and in a whisper informed me that all he had in his pocket was a ten pound note, that he owed the waiter so much, and that he did not like to give it to him for fear he should deduct his balance; so pushing the note under the table, he asked me to pay the bill. I was quite agreeable, and more so as I had a considerable score standing to my debit myself! My friend's face was a study when Otto returned with a very few pounds on the plate and *my* bills receipted!

Some of my old members may remember Tom Turner, the mandolinist, who used to amuse us with

his songs, which, although a trifle blue, were most amusing. Of course when he came to the Pelican Club he had been singing about London for a good many years, and was really in his prime in the old days of the Haymarket, when there was no licensing code to trouble the roysterers of the period, and when the cafés rarely put up their shutters till the milkman came, that is if they ever put them up at all except on Sundays. One of his most popular songs was "Sarah Bailey," the chorus of which ran something like this:—

**Dot and  
Carry One.**

"Her leg went down with dot and carry one,  
As she stumped away so gaily,  
But there's many more girls that's queer about the pins  
Than my lovely Sarah Bailey."

**Bessie's  
Revenge.**

This song was once the cause of a row royal between Bessie Bellwood and another lady, at a benefit at one of the music halls. Bessie and some friends were in one box, while on the opposite side of the house was a lady whom Bessie had a particular aversion to, in consequence of some past rivalry over some gentleman friend. Turner the mandolinist was on the programme to do a turn, and Bessie artfully sent for him to her box, and while he partook of a drink, expressed a hope that he would be sure and give them his well-known song "Sarah Bailey." Turner was only too anxious to oblige Miss Bellwood, and gave the song in question. The result was, as I have said, a tremendous row, for the lady whom Bessie played this trick upon, was reported to have also a false leg like Sarah Bailey's.

**"The Mate"  
as an Artist.**

One of our most hospitable hostesses, whose Sunday luncheons, a few years ago, were the talk of the town, gave an evening party in her house, in a street off Piccadilly. There was a tremendous gathering of people there, and one of the attractions of the evening was a palmist, "Cheiro," I fancy, but I am not sure. The fortune-teller was accommodated in a little canvas tent that had been built for him out at the back on the leads, and at various times throughout the evening we went in two by two, to have our fortunes told. The late Sir John Astley, "The Mate," went with me, and "Cheiro" proceeded to examine his hand, and informed him that he had the artistic temperament in a high degree. His eye for colour was superb, and his art of drawing not to be equalled. "The Mate" scratched his head, and said:—

"You may be right, Professor, but the only thing I ever drew was a bill, and that 'Sam' refused to discount."

It turned out afterwards that the palmist had mistaken Sir John Astley for Lord Leighton, who was then President of the Royal Academy, and whom the racing baronet was not unlike, with his white hair and handsome white beard.

**A Sham  
Prisoner.**

One of the most impudent tricks I ever heard of, was played by a young sprig on the same hospitable lady. He was in great monetary difficulties, and he and my boxing manager concocted a story of his arrest by a tip-staff from the castle of Holloway. Johnny Fleming personated the bailiff, and he with the prisoner and the other man, drove in a four-wheeled cab to the lady's house. The "other man" was ad-

mitted to her presence, and he told her a long story of the prisoner's misery. She was a sweet, sympathetic woman, and sent round to one of her tradesmen to borrow the money to prevent his being taken to Holloway.

Luckily for the lady, my young friend shortly afterwards came into a great deal of money, and was enabled to pay back the loan, but he very wisely never let out the trick that he had played upon her.

All who know Coote Synge Hutchinson's son, "The General," will remember what a methodical man he is. Some years ago he used to keep a note-book in which he used to jot down his daily expenditure, and make up the account weekly. One afternoon, in the smoking-room of one of the many clubs he belonged to, he was observed walking up and down every now and again, clasping his forehead, evidently in great distress.

"What's the matter, Coote?" said one of the members.

"I have been making up my accounts for the week," said he, "and I can't make the total right by a penny."

"Let's see where it's wrong," said his friend, taking the book from his hand. "Why," said he, "you have made a mistake and put down *The Sporting Times* a penny instead of twopence, that's where the error is."

I met "The Salt" in Piccadilly, and thought he did not look well.

"The Salt" as a Lodger. "You seem a bit low spirited?" I said to him.

"Well," he said, "to tell you the truth, I've got a



bedroom at the Sword and Anchor Club, and I come out only at night-time. I am, as a fact, hiding from my duns."

"You don't want to stop at the Club," said I; "why not come and stay with me for a week or two?"

He accepted the invitation.

"Now," said I, "you are a guest, and my idea of a guest is, that he shall have all he wants in reason; there are no hours for meals, save dinner, and that is at 8 o'clock."

I gave him the best bedroom I had, and every morning I sent him up a pint of wine, with a devilled biscuit, or anything he fancied; and most particular he was to have a bottle of eau-de-Cologne in his bath, believing that to be the greatest pull-me-together pick-me-up on this earth.

Sunday night was the evening on which I usually gave a little dinner party at home.

The first Sunday night "Salt" stayed in, and we had the usual kind of enjoyable evening.

Next morning I went up to "Salt's" room with a great bottle and two tankards—a pint for me and a pint for him—a hair of the dog that bit us—when he began a long and solemn lecture to me on the subject of economy.

"Dear 'Swears,'" said he, "you know those dinner parties of yours are the most enjoyable I have ever had the luck to sit down to, and the amusement is grand. But it is a waste of money, a waste of money, my dear boy. You ought to economise! Now's the time to save your money, while you're young. A time will come when you'll want it. Personally, I am one of those happy-go-lucky fellows who never think much of to-morrow, as long as I am enjoying the

dinner of to-day, but you have your way to make in the world, and it is a mistake your being so extravagant.

His advice seemed to haunt me throughout the day, so before going to bed on the Monday, I said to my man George :

“George, don’t take any more champagne up to the Captain’s bedroom in the morning. Take him up a pint of tea and three thick slices of bread and butter, with the newspaper ; also take the eau-de-Cologne out of his bathroom, and the scented soap ; buy twopence worth of mottled soap and put it there in its place.”

Next morning, at ten o’clock, George came to my door. The Captain, he told me, “was going on any way,” and insisted on seeing me at once. I leisurely hauled on my dressing-gown and went upstairs.

“What’s the matter, ‘Salt’ ?” I asked.

“Look here,” said he, “when I gave you a lecture yesterday on economy, I did not intend you to practise it on me, neither do I intend that you shall, as long as I stay in your house.”

Another day during his sojourn with  
“The Salt” me, a letter arrived for me from the  
in Pawn.

“Salt,” dated from some address at Fulham. It ran :

“Dear ‘Swears,’—Will you kindly ask your man George to pack up a suit of clothes, clean shirt, etc., and send them in a bag to me. And also, like a dear old soul, put a fiver inside the shirt front, where I shall know where to find it.

“If you don’t do it I am afraid I shall be left a prisoner where I am.”

I sent his clothes down, but forgot to send the fiver.

That evening "Salt" came home to dress: "Look here, 'Swears,'" said he, "you might have had greater trust in me than that. Do you know what's happened?" I didn't.

"Well," said he, "you will have to lend me some shirt-studs to-night, for my bag arrived, and in it there was no fiver, as you are possibly aware. I apologised to my friend, and said I would send a cheque when I got up West, meanwhile asking for the loan of half a sovereign, which I promised to include in the cheque. What do you think my quick-witted friend replied?"

I shook my head.

Said she, I mean he, "Dear old 'Salt,' I anticipated this, so while you slept I pawned your studs for a fiver. Here is the ticket, old chap, and I think five shillings, which I willingly give you, will land you where you want to go to."

## CHAPTER V

We take a  
Grouse Moor.

WHEN the Pelicans were located at Denman Street we had far more cheery times than later at the palatial premises we finally found a home in. The reason of this was because we were all, I and my members, like a family party, in fact, sometimes a deal more affectionate than most families are. We were all more or less in a state of impecuniosity, and when one of us struck oil the others shared in the good fortune as long as it lasted. On occasions, also, the finances of the Club were reinforced by the advent of a new and wealthy member, and the arrival of one of these specimens of the "oof bird" was the cause of some of us having a very pleasant time one autumn, although it caused me to sadly neglect my duties as proprietor. The provider of the entertainment hailed, I fancy, from Australia; he certainly was full of gold, and he first came into prominence as purchaser of a share in the old Royal Music Hall for the late Sam Adams, giving a grand banquet to celebrate the deal. His name was something like "Kingdom Come," and Shirley Brooks promptly nicknamed him "The Prayer," by which sobriquet he was known to the readers of the *Sporting Times*, while he was a resident in Bohemia. He was a good sportsman, however, and

was anxious to secure some shooting, and naturally sought my aid. He could not have come to a better man, for, although I knew nothing of the subject, there were a number of good fellows members of the Club, who were only too anxious to shoot over other people's moors, and ride other men's horses. So I called together a few of the best of the sporting lot, and put it to them how they would best like to spend three months at our friend's expense.

After yachting, Rocky Mountains, and numerous other suggestions had been propounded, a grouse moor, with good mixed shooting and some fishing, met with general assent. So I was deputed by our rich young friend to see about securing one. As I never shot a grouse in my life, and had never seen a grouse moor—of course I was the one who naturally they thought knew all about it.

We adjourned our meeting till the next day, when we all agreed to meet at lunch. I got hold of my friend, Uncle Ned, and with his help we visited all the shooting agents in the West End, and he being thoroughly conversant on the subject, we obtained particulars of a shoot to be let at Staffa, near Uig. They were all waiting for us at lunch, the Money Bird in the chair, when we laid the particulars before the luncheon committee: 800 brace of grouse were guaranteed on this moor, a few deer (not Piccadilly ones), in fact, a general bag, without the game bag, would show about 2000 head mixed shooting.

"Now," said our money spinner, after it was agreed we should immediately take the place, "'Swears,' you will have to arrange everything—all details." "Well," I said, "the first detail I want is a cheque to pay for the hire of the moor—it came to 800 guineas." Then

I said, "Have you any dogs, etc., etc.?" He said, "No! I will leave it all to you."

Well! that afternoon we became possessed of a shooting lodge with the entire right to shooting and fishing over the estate of 60,000 acres. Now my troubles began: first with the dogs—there was my fighting dog, Dumb Jack, 36-lb. champion—a fine dog, he might do for one; then there were my bulldogs, nicknamed Sister Mary and Jim, they could go.

At the Club all was excitement; all the members had something to sell me. Uncle Andrew said he had the finest soft-mouthed brace of retrievers that had been shot over for three seasons—very valuable dogs. (I heard him say to a friend aside, "They are very soft-mouthed, they have been fetching and carrying stones which my boy has flung for them for the last twelve months.") Another had deer-hounds, another had spaniels, and swore they would find game whether it was on the island or not. Then I had to get servants, whom I secured with the aid of George and another of the Club servants—doubtless good men at mixing drinks, but I was dubious about their abilities in a shooting party.

I then started laying in stores in case of a three months' siege, and after having purchased every conceivable kind of dry goods, such as pickles, jam, eggs, bacon, condensed milk, cartridges, pistols, etc., I arranged for it all to be put into one strong case, and then engaged a lorry-van to come to the Club to take it away. But alas! I was like a man who was his own architect, and built a house forgetting to put the staircase in; for after having the carpenters in the committee room, as they suggested it would be better

to build the case there because it was so large, and after filling it up with the different things, I looked and thought, how are we going to get it out? Well, they said, it won't go through the door, and it is too big to go through the window, so to make a long story short, we had to take the window out, and make it large enough for the case to go through. But when we had done that, after measuring the window and measuring the case, we found we should want a crane to lower it on to the lorry-van, so we improvised ropes, and at last, with the aid of the whole staff of the Club, we managed to lower it out of the window, and just as it was about to alight on the van some waggish member gave the horses a "gee up," and away they went without the case; the rope broke, down fell the case, and, I suppose, falling hard on the asphalte, some matches ignited, the gunpowder or cartridges burst, and I don't suppose from the time Denman Street was built was there heard such an awful explosion, for it blew the case and all its contents into the air. Here's a pretty go, Joey, as the clown said—all the party had gone by the mid-day train, I staying behind to meet them at Glasgow, to see the luggage off, and here everything was blown to pieces. The only amusement it gave was to those members who had not been invited, and they seemed to enjoy the joke hugely. I have always had my suspicions that our friend Hughie must have put in a miniature infernal machine. I wired to Glasgow: "Don't wait for me, but go on to the moor; terrible accident in Denman Street, cartridges exploded and blown everything to pieces. Thank God, no loss of life; am writing full details; shall not be able to arrive for another four or five days." I had to

start again, and as in everything experience teaches, I had every article packed separately. In the meanwhile I was inundated with telegrams from the moor. Mr Stafford saying, "We have all arrived, but there is nothing to eat in the house. What are we to do?" My reply was, "Test the resources of the moor."

At length I arrived in Skye, after many adventures, with all the cases of provisions intact. It really was a beautiful place, and I had about the best time I ever enjoyed in my life. Pinnacular mountains all around; and regarding one of these heights, the Quiray—a neighbour of ours in the misty isle—there hangs a tale.

One of the guests, not myself, prided himself on being a great climber and walker, and we would find him looking at the height and remarking:—"Take a good man to get to the top of that!"

I made plans. "Has any one,"  
**A Mountain that** I casually asked of one of the ghillies,  
**was climbed.** a strapping Skyeman, "Has any one ever been to the top of that mountain?"

"Yes, sir," said he, "I have" (in luck).

"How long," I added, "did it take you to do it?"

"Half a day, sir, to get there and back."

"Very difficult?" I queried.

"More difficult," said he, "coming down than going up."

"Well," I said to him, "I have a little commission for you to execute. I want you to say and swear that I have been to the top, and I want you to go there for me and say nothing about it. See! And I'll give you a sovereign for your trouble."

Giving him a stick and a handkerchief, I told him



to place the stick firmly on the very summit, and to then tie the handkerchief to the stick.

He carried out his instructions to the letter, and one day when they were all at lunch, I was found to be missing. This occasioned some talk, and no one knew where I'd gone. Half way through the luncheon, I arrived, walked into the dining-room, flung myself down on the nearest seat, and remarked exhaustedly :—

“For God's sake, get me a whisky and soda.”

“What's the matter, ‘Swears?’” they asked.

“I have done,” said I, “a thing I—I will—I will never do again in—my life. I have been up to the top of that mountain.”

“It is a lie, a damned lie, sir,” said the great climber.

“My dear Archie,” I remarked, “it argues nothing in regard to my mountaineering prowess that you can't do it. My handkerchief is planted on the top of the mountain, and with a powerful telescope you will no doubt see it. I have done it and I am proud of it—proud of it, sir—and I want the achievement duly chronicled in the game book.”

Next day dear old Archie was very distant.

Then there came a morning when he was missing from the breakfast table.

His servant advised us that the Major had gone out some hours ago.

We had had a stiff day, and in the cool of the evening were calmly smoking on the lawn, when a weary, woe-begone, dust-powdered figure hove in sight.

Archie!!

“What the devil have you been doing?” we queried

simultaneously. He looked as if he had been set upon by hyenas.

"I have been," said he, sinking into a chair, "to the top of that mountain, and I found 'Swears' handkerchief, and here it is. But I'm damned if I think 'Swears' put it there!"

To this day he frequently asks me very graciously whether or not I really did make the ascent.

**A Pool that  
was fished.**

Near our lodge resided a Presbyterian clergyman, a good old soul. Behind his manse, at the bottom of his garden, I noticed a big, dark, splendid looking pool, and I often used to think: "By Jove, for the sweep of a splash net in that."

After dinner at our place, I remarked to him, as if attaching no great importance to the point: "There must be a lot of fish in that pool at the bottom of your garden."

"There are no fish there," replied the clergyman, with what appeared to be unnecessary emphasis.

I took two or three into my confidence, and after we had well filled the old boy up with coffee and liqueurs, and whisky and soda, his gait as he threaded his way homeward was like the French of "Ouida," or the flight of a tumbler pigeon—erratic.

Ned de Clifford, Dan and Clem Finch, and I didn't go to bed that night, but stayed up till dawn, when the group of us made tracks for the pool, which we had the word of a minister of the gospel for it, was fishless, and there, with the aid of a net and two ghillies, we emptied the pool.

More frightened than the fish were the ghillies. Never shall I forget the glorious splash of fish that met our gaze when the net was drawn up on the

opposite bank—fifty or sixty magnificent salmon, one of them almost thirty pounds.

The smaller fish, like true sportsmen, we returned ; the bigger ones we took, and before going to bed for a few hours sleep, we sent to the parson a polite note inviting him to lunch.

He came.

When his eyes gazed upon the thirty-pounder, he exclaimed in his tartan language :—

“Sh’mon, but you haf been after haffin’ gran’ sport this mornin’. Did you catch this in your own water?”

We said we had had splendid sport, we should like to show him.

We showed him the lot, and his eyes stood out of his head as he viewed the take. We asked him would he accept two or three, and he said he would with the greatest of pleasure!

Before leaving for the South, we all went to say good-bye, and I could not help telling the old chap that he had been mistaken. That we ought to inform him that his pool, which he thought was empty, was full of fish, and that the great take we had shown him, and part of which he had eaten, came out of his own pool, at the foot of his garden.

## CHAPTER VI

In  
Bankruptcy.

BEING hard up is no novelty to most people, and I have had my share of ups and downs. It is curious how poverty affects different men,—some just give themselves a shake, don their best clothes, and go and “touch” the first friend they meet for as much as he will stand from a dollar to a fiver. Others hypothecate their wardrobe with “Uncle,” and proclaim to the world their neediness; while the weakest wend their way to the embankment, and so out of the world by way of the river. Fortunately, I have never been pushed to such extremities, although I had very hard times, when my telegraphic address might have been Bankruptcy Buildings, London.

Most prudent people are aware that if by chance they should become bankrupt it would be wiser if they were to dispense with the wearing of personal jewellery, especially when they have to make an appearance before the Registrar in Bankruptcy. Strangely enough, such a common-sense idea never struck me, and on the only occasion that I appeared in the Bankruptcy Court, I learned the wisdom of this by a question put to a bankrupt who was being examined before my case came on.

Said the Registrar, or his clerk, to the bankrupt :—  
 “What have you in the way of jewellery?”

At these words I made a bee line for the nearest bar in the law courts, and left all my valuables in the charge of the barmaid until I had got through with my little business.

On the same occasion, as I was standing outside the Bankruptcy Court I was accosted by a lady, who in her time had been the managress of one of the largest of our theatres. She had lost all her money in theatrical management, but very pluckily went in for canvassing for advertisements and trying to sell various commodities on commission. She was not very successful, poor woman, at this sort of business, and very frequently had to resort to borrowing from her friends small sums of money, which were never expected to be repaid.

As we chatted, after she had made, and been granted the usual request for a trifling loan, she remarked to me :—

“What a dreadful place this is. I suppose some poor wretch is inside going through all the horrors of bankruptcy.”

At that moment my case was called on, and I shook Mrs C.’s hand, saying :—

“I am the poor wretch inside.”

How a  
 Flower Girl  
 Helped Me.

If I have a warm corner in my heart for a flower girl—and I own to the soft impeachment—I have good reason for it, as what I am about to relate will show. Some years ago—never mind how many—I had been having a rotten time of it, chiefly through backing too many Yellow Jacks—

a whole row of horses who followed the Great Yellow Jacks, excepting in finishing second. There was consequently a good deal more arithmetic on the slate than I was able to wipe off. In words, I owed a bill of thirty or forty pounds for my rooms, and my landlady—bless her aquiline features—was not a Mrs Lirriper. The diggings were in a street leading into one of the squares in a swagger part of the West End, and the landlady had run out of her natural stock of patience. I kept out of her way as much as I could, not caring to be interviewed, and she gave up writing me *billets doux* to which I returned no answers. But one day when she was having a “liker” the curtain went up and I was discovered. As they say in novels, I was ushered into the parlour. It was a short interview, and she had most of the talk ; the burden of it being that she had a daughter to bring up, and every penny she earned went to pay for her education. I may remark here that if I could have guessed then what a beautiful daughter she was bringing up—now one of the most charming comedy actresses we have on the stage—I might have tried harder to soften her heart towards her poor lodger. However, the long and the short of it was, I had to clear the slate or go, but, if I went, I was to leave my wardrobe until such time as I was able to redeem it with the amount of my bill.

We parted with mutual feelings, if not expressions, of ill-will, and I went out to look for forty quid. It was the wrong day. Every pal I spoke to assured me that if I had only seen him the day before, or could manage to wait until the middle of next month, or Ash Wednesday, or when the ship came

in, it would be all right, but that day, old man, awfully sorry, and the rest of it; it was impossible. As for looking for a bit of gold of my own—and there was some of it about—well, I soon gave that up. In quarters where I was owed a bit, the owers had just gone out. Well, I had raised enough for present necessities when I turned my steps towards Home, Sweet Home, and, as the poet observes, I bitterly thought of the morrow.

I was making my dismal way down the Hay-market when a voice broke into my meditations with, "Won't you buy a flower of pretty Kitty for luck?" There is a good deal of poetry in the idea of the flower girl, but as a rule the young ladies in that profession would not have a hundred to one chance in a beauty show. Kitty, however, was an exception; when she called herself pretty she spoke the truth. "Go away," I said. "Buy a flower? I have no money to buy anything with." Looking hard at me, she, in a voice that appeared to come straight from her heart, said, "What's the matter, guv'nor? You look a toff. You ain't broke, are you?" I replied, "Kitty, many a well-dressed man has a pocket as empty as I hope your basket will be when you are sold out." "Can Kitty do anything for you, guv'nor?" An idea struck me. "Do you want to earn a quid?" She looked at me hard. "Lord love you! I 'aven't earned half a dollar all the bloomin' time I've been trapseing up and dahn with the old barskit. A quid! Yus, if it's straight. I'm goin' to be married at Easter. My bloke, a chap that sells newspapers, and chestnuts when they're in, is mortal jealous o' me. I don't want no black eyes afore I'm married, if I 'aves to put up with them

after. Now, guv'nor, what is it?" "I will tell you, Kitty. If I don't pay my landlady forty quid to-morrow morning, she outs me, collars my swagger clobber, and gives me the key of the street. So now you know." She said to me mournfully, "How can I help you, guv'nor? I couldn't raise forty bob on all I have in the world—barring my feathers, for I couldn't part with them—let alone forty quid. W'y, it's the Bank of England." "And if you could, Kitty, you don't imagine I'm the sort of cove to borrow it of you, do you, Kitty? No, but you *can* help me, my girl. Listen. Come up to my rooms now with your basket, and I'll buy all your flowers. That is a plant for the landlady; but, this is the business. Underneath the false bottom of your basket, you can stow my clothes. A cove of my sort must go well dressed. If he didn't, nobody would ask him to dinner. As the song says :

'If you're poor, from your friends keep a distance,  
Hold up your head though your means be but small;  
Once let the world know that you need its assistance,  
Be sure that you will never get it at all.'

That's the world, Kitty. Now you see why I must have my swagger clobber got out." She said nothing for a few minutes, then she burst out with, "Look here, captin"—I had suddenly achieved military or Salvation Army rank—"there's my bloke. When we are 'avin' a bit of fried posh and taters together arter I'm sold out, as we generally 'aves, what's he goin' to say when he sees another bloke's clothes and boots in my baskit? I'm gorn on 'im, you know. All I've got belongs to him, and I've made up my mind to be jined like glue at Easter.



I know a clergyman Shoreditch way, as marries pore people for nix, and—" "Never mind, Kitty," I said, "it might make mischief between you, and I should not like that to happen." "Never you mind, guv'nor," she rejoined. "I'm game. I'll do it! I can't give you no card, but I can tell you where to call next day. And, if my bloke sees you—Gord help you. He'd set about you in two twos, and where he hits, he hurts."

Well, Kitty came up to my rooms laden with flowers, and she went away with as many articles of masculine attire of the very best, as she could carry. Next day I met her by appointment, relieved her of her charge, and handed her the sovereign.

Years after, as I was going down the Haymarket, a flower girl accosted me with, "Won't you buy a flower, captin?" I said, "No, I don't want any flowers." I am afraid I spoke rather harshly. I had something disagreeable on my mind. However, she kept on, walking with me, step by step, and repeating the entreaty, "Won't you buy a flower, captin?" I was still impervious, when she changed her appeal to, "Won't you buy a flower of poor old Kitty?" and then added plaintively, "W'y, don't you know me?" "Of course I do," I exclaimed. "You are Kitty, who carried off the clothes; come and have a drink." We adjourned to the nearest unobtrusive place of refreshment, and she had a double dose of "sherry wine," for that was her particular "vanity." I said, "Kitty, would a fiver be of any use to you?" "Lord! guv'nor," she exclaimed, "I can't say I've never seen one, fer I 'ave, but I never touched one in my life. A'course it would—but not that way. They'd think I'd sneaked it. Couldn't you give it me in coin?"

I could, and did, so I loaded her up with the equivalent of the fiver in sterling silver. In reply to a question which I put, she said very sadly :—

“Yus, guv’nor, I have two kids, but I ain’t married  
Your kicksies in my barskit stopped that.”

## CHAPTER VII

**Walking in New York.** THERE arrived in New York one day a wonderful little walker, "the celebrated pedestrian whose achievements equal those of Captain Barclay of Ury, who did 1000 miles in 1000 hours." An English sportsman brought him over, thinking perhaps that money could be made out of his man attempting the hitherto unattempted feat of walking 6000 quarter miles in 6000 consecutive ten minutes.

Walking down Broadway, I met the "marvel," his backer, and a man who was running the show. There was an air about the trio which suggested that they did not know exactly how to begin operations. Having nothing to do, for the good reason that I had no money to do anything with, I suggested that I should join the two and make a company of it. They agreed, and the lot of us put up at Sinclair House in Broadway, where Mr Watson (a well-known friend of English sport and sportsmen) did all he could to assist us. We prowled around for a scene for the feat, and at length struck a beer garden and saloon occupied by a Dutchman in 88th Street. He had a circular running track which on the holidays was as crowded with people as Lillie Bridge used to be in the old days. After a

long interview we proposed that we should put up a turnstile and make a door at the entrance,—he to feed us and let us have the use of his track in consideration of a third of the gate money. The arrangements completed, we went down town, saw the press, and fixed up for representatives to attend the ground and act as officials by way of vindicating our *bona fides*. Then alongside the track we arranged a tent with a chair bedstead, on which the wonderful walker would sleep.

We started at 12 o'clock midnight one Monday. It poured in torrents. The course was sodden and slushy, rain dripped cheerlessly in torrents, while we four miserable figures, cold and damp, did little to enliven the scene. I suggested to the pedestrian, whom I will call X., that he should postpone the start, but he would have none of this, though the pressmen agreed with me to a man—or perhaps I should say to a reporter—remembering my experience at a public dinner at which a commercial gent, when half-way through the sixth course, thoughtfully explained that he hadn't spoken to me before, not knowing I was a gentleman, thinking, in fact, that I was a reporter.

Start X. would and did, punctually at 12 o'clock midnight. A newspaper man rattled the bell in the Cinnerian (that's the word, I think), and off our man went on his self-imposed task. Little did I dream when I heard that bell tinkle how sick I should be of the whole affair for many years to come!

It was a Great Business. The first day our spectators numbered about fifty, including a postman (admission free), and a policeman (also a dead head).

To detail the undertaking would tire, but the visit we had from women pedestrians is worth a word. Real good creatures they were, who understood quite as well as any sportsman could the terrible nature of the task that the plucky little ped. had set himself, and many were the gifts of jellies and food they made him at times when the "company" had not the slightest idea as to where sustenance was to be got. Many a time did they take a turn round with him afternoon and morning to cheer him up on his weary way.

Then came the 4th of July, bringing with it much apprehension to the Dutchman, who feared that gin-slings and beers might make the Yankees somewhat frisky with an Englishman who sought to break a record in their country, for we had no alliances, or "White Man's Burdens," or "understandings" in those days. To allay his anxiety, we organised sports in another part of the ground by way of a counter attraction for the holiday makers. George Hazell, famous English pedestrian in his day, ran 10 miles; three of our lady pedestrians walked so many for a prize; and we had a bicycle race. Everything passed off well, and I think that was the only day we really drew any money, the Americans seeming to take pity on us, as well they might. True, there was a rush at our turnstile of people who wanted to get in for nothing, but the sports inside easily stemmed the rush, turned it back, and the would-be dead heads had to go off or pay. The oof came in very handy; I don't think Robinson Crusoe, on his return to Britain, stood more in need of it than we did.

As time wore on, interest in the attempt began

to grow among the medical profession, who visited us and were very kind indeed; but the public did not come; they couldn't be got to realise that there was anything particular in one man walking continuously and all by himself. What they wanted was a race; a man winning.

Towards the end of the month the landlord became very surly, and we saw that there were storms ahead. No money was being taken at the gates, so he shut off our supplies, and insisted that we should clear out. We were no use to him, said the unkindly fellow. What with boys pulling down railings, and wolves loafing around, and lots of other nuisances, his property was being destroyed—we must go, said he.

We were in dire plight, and had it not been for Dr Naylor, who took a big interest in the feat, and used to visit us every day, I am sure we should have fared very badly. Our straits may be imagined by the fact that among the items that went to the sign of the golden spheres was the belt won by our man at Lillie Bridge.

Down I went to the Bowery, to a man called O'Geogehan (I wonder does he still live?). It was a wonderful place was old O'Geogehan's, right in the roughest part of the town. All the prize-fighters of New York used to assemble there, just as in the old days here they used to gather at Jack Richardson's in Shoreditch, and when elections were on, the man who was lucky enough to secure O'Geogehan's aid always got the seat. Occult, I admit, but true, my dear friends. It was a large room, with a piano, a bar, and small tables, and in the corner an elevated platform turned into a 16-foot ring. Great was the

scene on a Saturday night. A fellow would leave his chair and his beer and step on to the platform, when the M.C. would shout: "Will any gentleman step up and have a spar with Mr So-and-So for three rounds? The loser to pay drinks." Then there would be a movement in another part of the hall, and the stepping up of another youth indicated that the challenge had been accepted. Then came the sparring match, after which another would be entered upon under similar conditions, and the fun would be kept up till ten or eleven at night, sometimes till two or three in the morning. Thus it was that O'Geogehan turned out so many good fighters. No one who was not game ever entered his place twice. To resume. I explained to O'Geogehan our sorry plight, and he told me he knew a man who had a theatre a few blocks down who would be almost sure to lend us his place in which to finish our feat. Together we interviewed the man with the theatre, and he consented to let us conclude at his theatre. I arranged to give him half the profits after the deduction of expenses, and in return he agreed to do the posting, and to engage a band to meet us and take us from 88th Street to the theatre, right through Broadway; "For," said he, "it will be a grand advertisement. And get a waggon with steps up to it, put your chap's bed in it, and directly he has done his quarter mile, we can lift him into his couch, after which he can step down and finish his quarter mile again." I warmly thanked O'Geogehan for his trouble and kindness. He was a good Irishman, and said fervently, "Not at all, mi bhoy, not at all; it's only too glad I am to help a fellow-countryman," and that moment I did not tell him

our hero was a Welshman. With that he came with me to 88th Street, and made all arrangements. After he had gone, I acquainted the Dutchman with what we proposed to do. He was wild and obdurate. "Unless you pay me for your food and drink," said he, "not one stitch of your clothes leaves my place." And I saw that he meant it. Again I went to the resourceful O'Geogehan. "Aha, mi bhoys," says he, "I've the tools to make that blooming old Dutchman alter his language. I'll send up six of my bhoys to-morrow morning who'll not only take your tent, but will pull down his blooming house if you want it. Six bhoys I'll send up; six of the finest bhoys you ever saw in your life."

The day came when we had to move, and, true to his promise, up came O'Geogehan's sextette. They were the biggest roughs, I think, that New York, or the universe for that matter, could produce. They talk of the London rough; well, well! Put him beside such Bowery boys as those who composed O'Geogehan's brigade! They arrived with band playing and banners flying,—one of the banners, a big one with poles and cords, setting forth the details of the feat, and following them a variegated crowd of loafers come to see the fun.

We interviewed the Dutchman. He stood his ground, and swore what I took to be terrible oaths in his own language that we couldn't go till we had paid. I very politely brought O'Geogehan's boys his way and introduced them. "Say, guv'nor," said the leader to him, "are you going to save us the trouble of moving you?" and before you could say "knife," that Dutchman was picked up and quietly



carried into his house ; and with that the other boys, in the twinkling of an eye, had everything down and into the cart amid the loud applause of the hundreds and hundreds who had gathered (alas ! too late) to see the wonderful walker. "Thank God," said the Dutchman, when told we were just about to move off, "I shall have some chickens left in the coops now !" (Boiled chicken had been strongly recommended to us by the doctor.)

With band banging and flags streaming, and with the applause of the crowd, we started on our famous walk. In due course, with the usual stoppages when the press representatives rang the bell, we reached the Bowery Theatre, by which time the crowd was enormous, big enough to make Barnum & Bailey turn pea-green with envy. Every preparation had been made for us, including the raising of one of the boxes to the level of the stage, so that X. might walk from it to the ring and do his requisite quarter miles.

On the first night the theatre was packed—simply stiff with people—and the women folk of the pedestrian world did not forsake us. Our visitors included many representatives of the scientific world, several of whom looked upon the feat with suspicion. They asked me many a time could I throw any light on the subject? I could have, but I didn't.

Night after night the house was packed during the fortnight of the match ; and night after night the women walked round with him. Night and day the theatre was open, and the flow of people was continuous.

One night rough lads came in and raised Cain by way of suggesting that the whole thing was a

sham, and a fraud, and a deception. They didn't understand it. Then the infallible O'Geogehan came once more to our aid. His brave boys cleared the theatre, knocking the disturbers about like shuttlecocks.

At the close of the fortnight, the whole of the press of New York and a great array of medical representatives attended to witness the end of what was really one of the greatest feats of endurance that has ever been witnessed in the pedestrian world. It seemed odd to hear even the medical men say after the last lap—for he did the feat—"What a fine time the old fellow will have now. Couple of days without getting up, I suppose." They did not understand that to have allowed X. to sleep for twelve hours after his big walk would have killed him.

As regards the financial side of the business, I regret to say it was a failure, and that we were as poor at the end as we were at the beginning. It was proposed to give the triumphant pedestrian a benefit at Manhattan Grounds, which was done. The proceeds were handed to him, and I suggested that we should come away at once and bank it, telling him that if he didn't, the big crowd around would probably relieve him of the cash of which he stood so much in need. But he didn't take my advice, and he went his way while I went mine.

Next day I heard from him that what I had anticipated had happened. Two fellows got hold of him. Said he, "What's it you're at?"

"Only trying to see how heavy you are," said the ingenious gentlemen.

These are my recollections of my first and only connection with the walking world.

## CHAPTER VIII

The Fight  
between  
Smith and  
Kilrain.

IN this country unquestionably the greatest event known in the annals of the prize ring during the present generation of fighters, was the battle between Jake Kilrain of America and Jem Smith. At that period, Smith was the chosen representative of the Pelican Club, whose members were impelled to call him their champion, not dreaming that a few years later their idol would be ruthlessly shattered. The fashion to have events of this description decided abroad arose rather from necessity than choice, and consequently, in this case the shores of France were chosen for the rendezvous. Great secrecy had to be observed in carrying out the necessary regulations, for without a doubt there was determination in the minds of many of the multitude to be there at all risks and hazards. As the eventful day approached, those who could be absolutely certain of being present, grew anxious and fearful, lest they should be left behind. They knew nothing whatever as to how, when, or where the championship was to be determined, or the route to be taken to journey to the assigned place of destination. This was, so to speak, the fight of the century, and under the auspices and immediate patronage of the Pelican

Club, none but gentlemen, and people closely bound up in the interests of the combatants, whose presence could not under any circumstances be denied, were to have the privilege of being present. Never in the history of the prize ring has a more distinguished company been seen round a twenty-four foot ring. It was pitched on the grass of a meadow on an island in the silvery Seine.

Notwithstanding the presence of men whose titles bore with them the right to wear a coronet, it is not for a moment contended that the assemblage equalled in number those of the days when with lords, earls, dukes, and the king himself, the vast public mingled in their thousands to witness a prize fight. But what may be avowed beyond all refutation is the fact that the ring was never more honourably or more influentially patronised at any period of its existence than on the occasion set apart for Kilrain and Smith's fight. The transit of the men from Merry England proved an anxious and trying task. An arrest was feared, though the binding over for an attempted breach of the peace would not have in the least interfered with the proceedings, as, contrary to expectation, the fight was never intended at any stage of its formation to be decided in this country. The first man to leave was Jem Smith with his trainer Jem Howes, and his seconds Jack Harper and Jack Baldock. Their destination for the time being was Rouen, there to wait future and final developments. A few days later, Jake Kilrain departed with his trainer Charley Rowell, and his manager and *fidus Achates* Charley Mitchell, who, in conjunction with Ned Donnelly, seconded him.

One Sunday night, Anderton's Hotel dined a

number of journalists who had had "the route" for the fight—but only "the route." All they knew was that they were bound for France, and that they would, under guidance, book to Paris. In Fleet Street, groups of curious persons who had not had "the route," hung about the office of the *Sporting Life*, and shadowed every known member of the staff of that journal in the vain hope of finding out where the fight was to come off. To throw them off the scent, hansoms were dismissed just beyond Charing Cross, and other chariots engaged. The run across to Dieppe was uneventful. It disclosed little or nothing, except the interesting fact that the seconds engaged to officiate were so many helpless babes in the arms of Neptune. The hot water and pepper which is called soup (a franc a time) at the Dieppe railway station was happily not absorbed in sufficient quantity to reduce the number of passengers who took the train for Rouen. There they discharged themselves to wander about the railway station and mystify the inquiring Gaul, who was *not* satisfied with the assurance that steeplechasing was the object of the journey. Two devotees of the P. R. had vowed a vow that they would be on the spot if anybody else got "left." One was the redoubtable Macevoy, who speaks French like a native, and the other Bill Riley of the Standard Music Hall. It had always been supposed that Mac's superior knowledge of French, and French topography, and French everything, would bring him "home" if the less gifted of the *voyageurs* were lost: but it did not. "Johnny" Gideon, with his son, came on to Rouen from Paris. Johnny, the patron of Tom Sayers, was in high glee when he chanced upon his friend, Byron Webber, who happened to get into the

same carriage at Rouen. "Now, we shall get to know where it is!" was J. G.'s exclamation. But B. W. could not impart the necessary information. As a matter of fact, the determined point of embarkation on the Seine was within the knowledge of but two or three of the managers of the expedition, and was not disclosed until, at a junction and stopping-place, the journey was nearly over.

For several days we were located at the Cathedral Town, and occasionally Smith and Kilrain met in their walks abroad, exchanging a by no means unfriendly greeting as they passed by. Rouen Cathedral was a pious centre of attraction to Kilrain, who, religiously inclined, attended mass and benediction on Sunday morning and afternoon. On the journey to Rouen we were obliged to wait for some little time at Amiens, and taking advantage of the halt, visited many ancient and venerable landmarks. At the head of a narrow, somewhat obscure, and by no means attractive street, we discovered Amiens Cathedral, and promptly entered the sacred edifice. Mass was being said at one of the side altars,—a mass for the dead. A sister of charity knelt at the extreme end of the small congregation, counting her beads, and an old woman prostrated herself on the cold, bare stones, with her head almost touching the floor. She must have been at least ninety years of age, and as I knelt for a few seconds I could distinctly hear a low, mumbling recital of the Litany for the dead. *Ora pro nobis. Deo gratias.* Joining our party, we hastened to the terminus, and finally reached Rouen.

Our hotel faced the quay, and early on the Sunday morning, in a miniature snowstorm, a dis-

tinguished party arrived from England. Their fighter, Jem Smith, was located at a less pretentious part of the city, but the Pelican nestlings decided to abide under the same roof as the American Eagle.

Kilrain at this period was getting fidgety, and rather morosely resented the polite and good-natured assurances of the Pelicans, who were just as anxious that he should receive as kindly attention as Smith. With them, partisanship, as generally understood, was cast to the winds, though, as a matter of course, they hoped to see Smith win, but failing Smith, were prepared to honour Kilrain as they, above all others, knew how to honour a brave man, belonging to any country or any colour; and yet Kilrain could not be prevailed upon to understand the precise condition of affairs. He believed that an enemy had trespassed upon his territory, though the people he foolishly understood to be foes were in reality his friends. No amount of persuasion, eloquent or otherwise, could, however, shake his belief, and in the end Mitchell left him to ponder over the subject as he thought fit, and stated the case in language that could not possibly be misinterpreted. Some palliation might be still discovered for Kilrain's groundless objection in the sense that men trained to the hour, as it is termed, are often peevish, restless, and extremely disagreeable in society not of their kind, and not to their own particular liking. They court and yearn for absolute quietude. On the other hand, there are men upon whom society sets the seal of contentment and happiness, men who thrive upon the daily attendance of friends, whose constant levees assist to drive away dull care and dispel *ennui*. Kilrain was not of this order of being, and once appeared likely

to assault a Pelican, who, in the kindness of his heart, inquired as to the American's welfare. Here Jake made a very fatal mistake, one that subsequently he, in conjunction with his best friends, regretted. There are friends, and a man's *best friends*. Had Kilrain seen the error of his ways in time, he might have found among the Pelicans friends who provide well for a man without asking the world to recognise their charity.

The "touring" party rose early next morning, and ready after breakfast to depart for a place of which (as previously stated), they had no knowledge. The message was one of the two termini, and it was in consequence of this that three Americans, Wakely, Lynch, and Johnson, who had come over specially to be in Kilrain's corner, acting upon their own indifferent knowledge of the city, went to the wrong station and thus lost the fight. The journey by rail was not a long one, and a short walk took us to the river side, where Picton's launch was anchored waiting for our reception. The *voyageurs* were a select party who had to be individually identified and passed, one by one, on board the steamer. In the result it was discovered that one or two enterprising gentlemen had made the expedition in vain. They saw no fight. One Briton, resident in Paris, who was said to be a journalist, joined the party without a ticket. He went as a waiter, and actually assisted behind the bar! The word was given to keep as much below decks as possible. Kilrain, dark and gloomy, and looking decidedly vicious with a couple of days' beard on his determined mug, occupied a place amidships, with Pony Moore for consoler. Smith, happy and jolly, sat aft, the central figure of a group



of jocose jesters and story-tellers. The two men who took the business most seriously were Kilrain himself, and poor Archibald M'Neill, the journalist, who was making his last expedition. He was unhappy in his vocation from the first, and he looked it. To anticipate a little, it may be said that the poor fellow was a bit off his head. At any rate, before the fight had proceeded more than a round or two, he went to a brother journalist, and in horror-stricken tones exclaimed, "Isn't it awful!" Plainly, a man of such a highly-strung nervous nature should not have been despatched on such an errand. However, down the river we steamed to a place called Bonnière, and on an island landed in good spirits and hopeful of satisfactory results. All this travelling, however, made it very late before the men entered the ring. As a result, twilight overshadowed the scene long before a truce was declared, though there was plenty of light left to fight many more rounds. A very excellent "pitch" was selected. The commissaries of the ring were not long in driving the stakes into the ground, stringing the ropes and making everything perfect for the admission of combatants and seconds. Meanwhile the rivals were preparing for the ordeal, and the spikes in their shoes examined by the opposing factions, for the purpose of discovering that not more than the regulation number, three, was in evidence. Pails of water, brandy, sponges, ice, towels, bottle-holders, and all the accessories of war were arranged in each man's corner for immediate use. In the absence of stools upon which fighters sit at the end of the rounds, experienced men were requisitioned, and their backs formed a resting-place for the tired warriors. The fighting gear being nicely

and comfortably adjusted, and colours tied round the waist, a signal was given, and the pugilists ordered into the ring. All being ready, they advanced, and with their seconds shook hands in orthodox fashion. Retreating to their corners, time was called, the men were delivered at the scratch, and put up their hands for the first round. The initial symptom of serious consequences arose when Smith was knocked down like a bullock quite close to his corner. Harper and Baldock picked him up and carried him to a haven of safety. He was in a very critical condition, but by dint of wonderful tact, discretion, and assistance, the like of which no surgeon could (at least not in the time so necessarily short) have summoned or prescribed, Smith was sent up surprisingly strong and eager for the fray. A little while after Kilrain knocked him down again in precisely the same spot, and this time Smith appeared to be beyond all human aid. I certainly thought he was dying. Baldock and Harper raised the prostrate figure and tenderly bore him to his corner. Smith's ear had swollen to the size of a bladder. In double quick time restoratives were applied, and by *suction* his wounds reduced. Up to this time he had consumed more than a quart of brandy. He must indeed have been a perfect Hercules to have survived successfully all the rough treatment to which he was subjected by Kilrain, and to every one's surprise, for the second time he toed the scratch fit to fight the long night through. Smith, splendidly and perfectly trained, was never so well in his life, never fought better, and, above all, showed that he, to use a well-worn simile, was gifted with the courage of a lion. No man was ever seconded better

in a prize fight, and the marvel was that Harper and Baldock, who, of course, had no medical experience, were able to perform a task that apparently was only within the compass and treatment of a skilled surgeon.

It is very wonderful what cures this class of man will effect. All the more astonishing when their *modus operandi* is studied, and a little time (but a few seconds) given them for purposes of resuscitation. They do everything in the period that a surgeon would take to think of what was best to be done. It is, as a matter of course, decidedly unprofessional-like, and certainly very rough, the work, if you please so to call it, of "empirics." And yet with their superficial knowledge they assist nature for the reason that experience has taught them how easily she is advanced in her course of convalescence by simple, quick, and powerful remedies, external as well as internal. Remember these fistic doctors are only allowed half a minute by the rules of the prize ring between each round. This allotted space, however, is always ingeniously prolonged, and very often increased to several minutes, even in the best of regulated fights, by imaginary grievances, objections, and futile but interesting appeals to the referee, who generally turns to them a deaf ear, knowing full well the object for which they have been raised. With the old-time fighter, the battle would have been of short duration. Kilrain was not wicked enough, and too much of a novice, to understand "the tricks of the trade." In other words, he was merciful and strictly just; far too considerate and far too lenient for the business in which he was engaged. To be correctly fair throughout a prize fight and adhere religiously to hard and

fast rules is never dreamt of in any official philosophy. It must be a very gross and serious infringement of the rules to entail disqualification, for fouls are constantly proved and ignored. Kilrain when he had the whip hand of Smith, in lieu of fighting, wrestled. But, on the ground he had not only one man to beat, but three. The principle that all is fair in war actuates the feelings of seconds in a prize fight. In picking their man up they will, accidentally or otherwise (more often otherwise), pay too much attention to his opponent, who very acutely feels the effects of their hasty, but painful handiwork. I noticed our close proximity to the Seine was of great use to Smith in the matter of water, a man being despatched in hot haste for pails of water. So the fight continued, and the once forlorn hopes of the Smith contingent rose higher and higher, until they were on a level with the anticipations of the opposite faction. A gloom, the harbinger of night, was coming up from the river gradually and surely, making its way towards us, and causing a little uneasiness in our select circle. There was a consultation. The umpires, Fleming for Smith, and Harding of America for Kilrain, protesting that they could not see their watches. Harding came to the ring side without a timepiece, and was lent a metal-faced watch, which to a man near-sighted would have been difficult to read in the full light of a sunny day. Harding's visionary powers, unlike Samuel Weller's, were always limited, so there was nothing to be surprised at when he declared his inability to note the time. Fleming was understood to be a long-sighted man with a keen eye to the main chance. Seeing that Smith was a little stronger on his legs than Kilrain, and towards the finish looked more

likely to win, some surprise was occasioned when Fleming took the same view of his watch as Harding. This reputed long-sighted man was certainly not looking in the right direction, though I fully believe that the seconds of both combatants were anxious to proceed. In fact, if my memory does not betray me, they strongly protested against an adjournment, and justly so, seeing that Kilrain and Smith were in a fit condition to fight many more rounds, and the light justified the experiment. However, the umpires willed otherwise, and the fight was foolishly, very foolishly, stopped, because one man protested that he could not accurately see his watch, and the other never tried—a very unsatisfactory course of events—more especially as the fight anxiously concerned the world at large, and might have ended decisively one way or the other instead of in a draw.

This was agreed to on the steamer journeying to Vermont *via* Paris. I noticed Kilrain and Smith very closely as they walked off the battleground to the boat, and according to my way of thinking, Smith was the stronger man. A few days later they made a triumphal entry into Fleet Street, and to mark the popularity and interest manifested by the public, a crowd assembled that has certainly not been seen in our generation within the confines of that historic thoroughfare. The scene outside the *Sporting Life* on a Derby day was once upon a time described as an immense concourse of people, but great as it certainly was, the crowd that welcomed the English and American fighters exceeded it by many thousands. It was a crowd jammed together so tight that breathing room only could be obtained, and with great difficulty. Still they stood calmly watching the

open window, where Smith and Kilrain sat drinking each other's health and the healths of their friends. At various periods they cheered lustily, and then subsided into general commentaries upon the incidents of the fight. Thus the afternoon proceeded, and there the crowd remained until Kilrain and Smith took their departure. It was not long after this memorable home-coming, this feasting of the eyes upon modern day warriors of the prize ring, the like of which has no parallel in the memory of the oldest living expert—not even the adulation showered upon Sayers and Heenan—that Kilrain and Smith fell from their high estate; a few short months, and they were passed by with nothing more than a mere ordinary recognition, a momentary thought of the men who were once great without “having greatness thrust upon them.” They were like mechanical puppets without wires to set them going in the old sweet way, and with those wires there would have been no one to pull them. When will athletes, more especially men who depend upon their reputation for an existence, seriously think and ponder over the fact that their fame is fleeting, and once they cease to be athletes their places are filled by a class to which they once belonged, and they drift slowly but surely into the channel set apart for veterans who cannot act, but talk, simply talk and talk, until history becomes tedious and very monotonous reiteration? Tedious is a strong word to use, but its application is not so powerful after all, when the feeble old man sorrowfully and dejectedly tells the story of his life. You are obliged out of respect to be patient with him and listen to the oft-told tale, round which there is still a

halo of romance tinged with sad memories of better and more prosperous days.

**The Mystery  
of M'Neill's  
Death.**

It was a memorable fight, that of Kilrain and Smith, and such an invasion of France as that which took place in order that it might be brought off never occurred before, and is never likely to be paralleled. The impudence of it was matchless. To steam deliberately down the Seine, land upon the estate of a private gentleman, pitch the ring, and fight—could the cheek of the thing be surpassed? It was a deliberate piece of work, and took long in doing, as was shown when a member of the journalistic fraternity and an officer of the guards strolled about, gathering mistletoe. M'Neill fell flat in the cabin of the steamer during the return voyage. Physically, as well as mentally, he was all to pieces. The arrival in Paris was, on the part of the leading Kilrainites, sufficiently boisterous to have attracted the notice of the police. Next day's departure, when the party had to board a train from Paris that was crowded with people going to England for the Christmas holidays, one associates with "the last" of Archibald M'Neill. He could not find a place with any of his pals. At Amiens he wanted to join his friend Byron Webber, but there was, unfortunately, no room in the carriage. They never saw each other again.

To relate the last chapter of the dismal story, as far as it could be made clear, of poor Archibald M'Neill, would be to give an account of how the authorities in France who answer to our magistrates and police, do *not* prosecute an inquiry with a view to discovering the perpetrator of a crime. M'Neill fell into bad hands and was done to death. His

body was discovered in the harbour and—that was all. There was reason to believe that if the police had gone to work in a proper manner the perpetrators of the crime would have been captured. Mr David Christie Murray, the eminent novelist, who had been a comrade of M'Neill's on the Birmingham Press, and who was a warm friend of the missing man, took an active part in the search. A letter which he has written on the subject may be quoted for the vivid side light which it throws on the business, and an independent contribution to the history of the tragedy :—

*September 2nd, 1899.*

“To tell the whole story would take me more time than I have at my disposal, and would fill more space than you have to spare. I heard first that poor Mac was missing by a letter from Richard Gowing. This letter introduced Wellcome, an old friend of Mac's, who was profoundly anxious about him. Wellcome's *hearsay* news was that M'Neill had gone to the fight, that he had charge of a considerable sum of money to invest in betting, that he bore with him a rather peculiarly shaped and ornamented stick which belonged to Allison, that he was identified at the Hotel Grande Alliance, Paris, where he spent the night after the fight, that he changed a fifty pound English note there early on the following morning, that he missed his train, and, finding a later, reached Boulogne in time to see yourself and some others of his comrades, that he had called at some local estaminet for a drink, had left his borrowed stick behind him, ran back in a state of considerable excitement to find it, and missed the boat. The inquiries which Wellcome and I set on foot established the fact that M'Neill had spent the night at the Hotel Grande Alliance, that he had changed the note and missed the train. We traced him



into the hands of a professional *souteneur*, whose name I have forgotten. At nine o'clock he was seen in this creature's society in a *café chantant* near the Halle des Poissons, Rue de l'Amirol Bruit. He was known—in his own short-sighted way—to have produced a great handful of gold and silver there, and was seen to spread the pile upon a table before him, whilst he searched for a small coin to put in the saucer of a *chanteuse*. Nothing further of a determinate character is known, until at 1.30 a cry was heard by two English ladies who were sleeping at the hotel.

"The voice was English, and cried 'Help!' three times. One of the ladies was the wife of the Vicar of Windsor. Three days later, M. de Quenaille, exercising his dogs early in the morning, found a dead body on the shore between Boulogne and Pontabrique. The pockets of the clothes were all turned inside out and emptied. At the coroner's inquest it was established that there were seven rotund indentations of the skull, such as *might* have been made either by the hilt or the scabbard end of a gendarme's sword. It was established that at almost the time at which the cries of 'Help!' were heard, two gendarmes should have met at a rather dangerous crossing from one side of the *quai* to the other. The Boulogne authorities protested that the victim had missed his footing and had fallen into the water. They accounted for the head wounds by the theory that he had struck some portion of the *quai* in falling, and had been wounded by the impact of a screw. Some days after his inquest, certain Bank of England notes were sent anonymously to the authorities. At the suggestion of Henry Herman, who was staying with me at the time of the inquiry at Hotel Dominici, Rue Castiglione, the notes were analysed, and it was found that although they had been subjected to the action of water and salt, they had never been in sea water. The *souteneur* was arrested,

and was kept under observation for a considerable time. A gendarme who lived at Pontabrique was known to have exchanged a great number of English sovereigns for the money of the country. He died, as it was said at the time, of 'agitation,' and those of us who were engaged in the inquiry were convinced that he had some knowledge of the crime. The authorities opposed inquiry stoutly, and gave no sort of assistance to investigation. Long since then (but this is not a fact for publication, unless the name and circumstances are thoroughly disguised), a friend of ours visited the room in which the murder was actually committed. At full tide this room has deep water beneath it. Our friend is waiting, so he seriously assured me, only for the authority of the police commissaire, for license to relate the entire story. If you want the history of the extraordinary false scents on which we were deliberately enticed by the police of Paris, you can have it. If this for the moment will serve your turn, so far good.—Yours always,

“DAVID CHRISTIE MURRAY.”

## CHAPTER IX

MOST people associate brutality with boxing, and will not allow that any of its exponents are endowed with the finer feelings common to the majority of the human race. To these prejudiced persons, the mere fact of a man or boy being able to put up his hands in self-defence, lowers him in their estimation to the level of the brutes. Nevertheless, the enemies of the manly art of boxing cannot deny that its practice develops great courage, and we all know that really brave men are the gentlest of their sex; it is only cowards who are brutal, and cowards are soon found out in the boxing ring. I hold no brief for the defence of professional boxers, still less for pugilists, but for many years I have had a great deal to do with the section of society that provides fighters both with and without the gloves, and the constant sneers thrown at them annoys me. Boxers are very like other men, some good, some bad. I am not speaking of their skill but of their characters, and it would be unfair to condemn the class for the faults of one or two Hooligans, who, if the truth were known, have as much right to be styled boxers or pugilists, as the ladies who, charged at police courts with being drunk and incapable to describe themselves as actresses.

The Boy that  
Walked from  
Cardiff.

Whenever I hear or read attacks on boxers, I always think of a pathetic incident that occurred at the Pelican Club in Gerrard Street, a mere fragment of a human document, but one worth a hundred sermons against boxing: so here it is. One night one of the members, a gallant captain in the Army, on entering into the Club observed on the steps what looked like a ragged, muddy bundle of humanity, and drew the attention of the hall porter to it. The sergeant, an Irishman, was a good-hearted creature, but he waged war against the waifs who used to huddle up at nights on the Club steps, and he proceeded rather roughly to rouse the sleeper. It was only a bit of a boy, and Captain X bade him be gentle with the lad, who, on being questioned, stated that he wished to compete in the next boxing competition at the Pelican Club, and to that end had walked to London from Cardiff. Neither the porter nor the member believed this, and Captain X. sent for me to ask my opinion. Cross-examining the boy, I came to the conclusion that he was speaking the truth, so I gave instructions that he should have a bath and some food, while the sergeant promised to see that he had a bed somewhere.

Next day the boy from Cardiff was put through his paces in the gymnasium, and as he shaped well, although very thin and poor, my boxing manager put him into the next competition, where he had the bad luck to be drawn against a lad very much heavier than himself, and clever though he was in a natural way, for he certainly had never been taught how to box, he was beaten after a hard tussle. With so many competitors appearing at the Pelican week

after week, it can be easily understood that neither I nor my assistants could give much time to those who were beaten in their bouts, indeed we had enough to do to look after the winners, and also from experience we had to turn deaf ears to the "whisperers" who, under one pretence or another, tried to "touch" us for a bit of oof.

We all, however, took an interest in the plucky boy that walked from Cardiff, and when Captain X. sent his hat round, there was a liberal response. Had Rudyard Kipling been a member of the Pelican, he would surely have made a poem out of the youth's adventures. Only think of it, my friends, to walk a hundred and sixty odd miles with nothing in his pocket, on the chance of winning a couple of guineas, and then to be beaten after all!

A Sporting  
Chef.

Lionel Brough, one of the best raconteurs we have, has lately been giving the public some of the *chestnuts* with which he has delighted his Club and private friends for years past. One of these stories is so good that I make no apology for using it. According to him, a man who kept a small hotel and public house had great difficulties with his staff, who were always betting shillings and dollars on horse races. Eventually the nuisance became so great that he discharged them all, engaging in their place a number of foreign waiters who might be addicted to playing games of chance in their own time, but would not interfere with his customers' luncheons by the interest they took in the results of the various races. The cook and carver had to be an Englishman, as his patrons did not appreciate a *chef*. In engaging this person

he stipulated that he should not be a sportsman in a starting-price sense. Many applicants were refused because of this failing, but one who probably had received a tip from an unsuccessful candidate, professed such an abhorrence of betting and all its evils, that he was engaged by the landlord. All went well for a time until on one occasion a particular customer, requiring luncheon, the landlord himself went to the speaking tube communicating with the kitchen to give the order for the meal. He shouted down the pipe, "calves' head, one." The startling answer came back from the straitlaced carver, "Just my blooming luck. What's second and third?"

He knew his  
Business.

Carvers and waiters remind me of an old yarn about the late Alfred Cellier. He was staying with George Musgrove, of *Belle of New York* fame, who, some years ago, had taken a house at Ascot and wanted a butler. There were several applicants for the situation whom Musgrove was interviewing in his sanctum, while Cellier was absorbed in the morning paper. Musgrove was explaining at some length that he and his wife, being theatrical people, would frequently require hot suppers on their return from town, and that generally the place necessitated a servant who did not object to very late hours. The would-be butler summed up his capabilities for the berth by saying, "I have been six months with Mr Owen Hall." Cellier put down his newspaper, saying, "That will do, George."

Two well-known stars of the theatrical world were occupying a box with some friends at the

London Pavilion before it was re-built. Their host had ordered some drinks, and the ladies, presumably being somewhat thirsty, expressed their wish that he would hurry up the waiter, who was quite likely to dilute or substitute inferior liquor for what they had ordered. "Surely not," replied their entertainer, "no waiter would do that." "Ah!" snorted one of the ladies, "you don't know this waiter; we do. He's our brother."

**More about  
Waiters.**

**No Gentleman.** From butlers and waiters to private secretaries is a short step. Not long since a millionaire friend of mine, now no more, requested me, as one who knew the West End particularly well, to find him a sort of superior major-domo to take entire charge of his household, and generally assist him in entertaining. I promised him that I would do so, and walking home from the city, happened to mention the matter to my companion who was going westward with me. He jumped at the idea and said, "You might suggest me for the post." Unfortunately, with the brusqueness which is really quite foreign to my nature, I answered, "With pleasure, old man, but he wants a gentleman."

**A Cheap Punt.** It is wonderful how our greatest men are often put out by trifling misunderstandings. One summer afternoon I was down at Datchet surveying the scene from the bank, when who should come along but my friend Sam, evidently not in the best of tempers. On inquiry I learned that a telegram which he had despatched ordering a punt had miscarried, and now there was

not one to be had for love or money. It was most provoking.

"Don't let that trouble you," I said quietly. "Here, Bill!" I shouted, "put the cushions into that punt," pointing to the best I could pick out. In ten minutes Sam was poling up stream towards the Eton playing fields. In about three hours he returned thoroughly delighted with his trip.

"That's a rare nice punt," he observed. "Is she for sale?"

"I don't know," I answered, "but I'll try and find the owner."

"What," he cried, with a horror-struck look, "isn't she yours?"

"No," I replied, "I only wish she was."

Sam fled without thanking me for my hospitality.

One of the most melancholy cases  
**Fallen among** which I ever knew in real life was  
**Thieves.** that of Wellington Brown. His father had left him a very good hop business in the Boro', but Wellington much preferred the north bank of the Thames, and from the Criterion to Ludgate Hill the gigantic figure of the "Field Marshal" (for so he was nick-named) was as well known in every bar as Martell's brandy or Guinness's stout.

I can't quite make out how it happened, but I have been told it came about through meeting a discharged convict who had been a gentleman in a billiard room, but all of a sudden the "Field Marshal" developed the greatest partiality for the society of suspicious characters. He took an insane delight in hob-nobbing with men who had "done time" in visiting the vilest haunts where rascals



of all sorts assembled, and generally of becoming a sort of honorary member of the criminal classes.

It was in vain that his friends pointed out to him the perils which he ran, for several good-natured authorities at Scotland Yard had quietly hinted that Mr Wellington Brown was very well known to the police by reason of his associates. The "Field Marshal" laughed at the advice, and recommended the "cops" to "lag" him when he had done something worthy of the "jug." So matters went on till a crash came. Wellington Brown, on pleasure bent, went down to Plymouth, where he met two of his shady acquaintances staying at the same hotel as himself. Delighted to find himself with congenial companions, the unfortunate "Field Marshal" went all over the town with them, to bars, music-halls, and theatre. He occupied a bedroom next to theirs. Well, one fine morning there was a great hue and cry, a jeweller's shop had been broken into during the night, and robbed of a quantity of valuable property—watches, pins, rings, etc. One of the first places visited by the police was the hotel in question, the apartments occupied by Wellington Brown and his suspicious friends being particularly well searched. Nothing was found in the bedroom occupied by the brace of thieves, but, alas! up the chimney in the poor "Field Marshal's" chamber was found a parcel containing nearly all the missing property. Of course it had been placed there by the real culprits. Wellington Brown, it is needless to say, was arrested, and had to take his trial at the Assizes. The most strenuous efforts were made to procure his acquittal, but the facts were too damning; first, his constant association with noted offenders against the law, and

secondly, his appearance in Plymouth just before the robbery was effected. He earnestly protested his innocence, but was condemned to eighteen months hard labour. He came out of gaol an altered man, broken in spirit, health, and fortune. His friends kept his body and soul together, but for months they could not procure him what he most desired—active employment. A man who has been convicted as *particeps criminis* in a burglary is not looked upon as a desirable person to place in a position of trust. However, at last, thanks to the leniency of a charitable shipowner, he obtained the berth of assistant purser on a ship engaged in the Australian trade. But his ill-luck still followed him. While the vessel was loading at the docks, some of his former associates tracked him out and proposed a scheme for breaking open the strong room on the return journey, when it was known gold would form part of the freight. Wellington Brown manfully resisted their advances, but on the day before the ship sailed, they told him that if he did not agree to their demands, the captain and the ship's company would be informed of his conviction. The poor "Field Marshal" then threw up the sponge, and taking a train for Epping Forest, blew out his brains in a secluded glade. He left a letter behind explaining the motives which forced him to make away with his life, and blaming no one for his wrecked career but himself. This is the saddest story I ever knew in many experiences of a somewhat similar nature.

**Half a Mo'.** In the days before Rothschild and Baron Hirsch were names honoured by Jew and Christian alike, many Hebrews were

anxious to change their cognomen of Abrahams, Isaacs, or Moses to other more pretentious, high-sounding, aristocratic names. A family rejoicing in the name of Moses took the name of, well, let us say, Wellington. The name was not quite this, but it is near enough. They were very estimable people and entertained largely, among their acquaintances being an artist whose brother was an actor. On one occasion one of the daughters of the house intimated her desire to the artist to make the acquaintance of his brother, and it was arranged that he should bring him to dinner on the following Sunday. In giving the invitation to the actor, the artist informed him that the Wellingtons were rich, musical, and excellent hosts, but that it would be wise for him to avoid any mention of Jews or the name of Moses.

The evening arrived, and the dinner passed off successfully; afterwards Miss Wellington expressed her regret at not having seen the actor playing anywhere in London for some time. The mummer replied that he had just signed an engagement to play in *The Vicar of Wakefield*, upon which the lady inquired in what character he was to appear?

He began by saying "as Mo—," when remembering his brother's caution, he altered it to "as Wellington."

Satisfactory to the Syndicate.	Here is a story about a mining prospector which struck me as funny. Years ago, when Kimberley was in its infancy, a number of speculators subscribed several thousand pounds to send a mining expert a long way up country to report upon a supposed mine, and, if necessary, purchase it. The expert
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started, months passed away, and the Syndicate were beginning to be nervous as to the fate of their money, when one morning they received a telegram from the nearest town to where he was supposed to be prospecting the property, which ran:—

“You will be glad to know that I won the billiard handicap here.”

There is a story told of Mr W. S. Gilbert, the dramatist, and Mr F. C. Burnand, the editor of *Punch*, that may be worth re-telling.

“Bab’s”  
Reproach.

They happened one day to meet in Fleet Street, and after a few minutes conversation, were about to part, when Gilbert said:—

“By-the-bye, Burnand, I suppose a great number of funny stories are sent into your office?”

“Oh! yes,” said Mr Burnand, “thousands.”

“Then my dear fellow why don’t you publish them?” remarked Mr Gilbert, as he put out his hand to shake a good-bye.

## CHAPTER X

**To Brighton and back by Motor.** ON the first day of the trial trip to Brighton of coaches and motor cars, I chanced to be standing opposite to the Hotel Metropole in Northumberland Avenue. I forget what had brought me, but there I was. Noticing a sort of gathering of the clans, and being far too modest to think that I was the central object of interest, I questioned one of the bystanders in the absence of the policeman, who ought to have been present to answer inquiries.

"What does all this crowd mean?"

"Oh," was the reply, "it is to witness the start of the motor cars to Brighton."

At that moment a couple of friends approached, and one of them wanted to know what I was up to, the other remarking that they had come to see the start.

"We should have liked to join the excursion," said number one, "but we could not find a ticket."

"What do you mean?" said I.

"Oh," said they, "there is a breakfast here at the Metropole, and coaches are going down to Brighton; we should like to be on in that scene."

I thought a bit, and then I said—

"Would you really like to go?"

They said, "Certainly."

I rejoined, "You come along with me, and if you have got no tickets, never mind." With that I dived into the front entrance of the Metropole, and inquired where the breakfast was to take place? Then, turning to my companions (one of whom was a millionaire, and the other a Pink 'un), I said, just for the fun of the thing :—

"Look here, I will take you five pounds to one it shall only cost us a shilling to see all there is to be seen, and be banqueted into the bargain. And I give you my word, I don't know a soul connected with the show."

My millionaire pal was as ready as a blackbird is at a ripe cherry, or a thrush at an early worm.

"That is a bet, 'Swears,'" he exclaimed.

"Right!" I said. "Now you do what I do."

I then remarked in my sweetest and most persuasive manner, speaking at large :—

"Is *this* the way to the banqueting hall?"

"Yes, sir, yes, sir, it is," said the attendant commissioner with alacrity.

"So!" I remarked, turning my head over my shoulder to my friends, who were anxiously looking on, "Late again! always late!"

The commissioners evidently took me for a personage seriously interested in the motor car campaign, and I and my friends entered. In fact we were obsequiously ushered in.

Having seated ourselves at the end of the table, I summoned the waiter, and demanded a copy of the menu.

The waiter was as much impressed as the commissioner had been. He took me under his special care.

We had a very good breakfast indeed, and the Moët and Chandon '89, Cuvée 36, was "to rights." Yes, the breakfast and we agreed perfectly, but, how were we going down? On that subject my friends were especially curious.

I got up from the table and went round to where the chairman was sitting, and I thought, as my friends were curious as to how we were to take the road, that was the right moment for gratifying their curiosity.

I fired the question into the President's private ear. "How would you like us to go?"

He was politeness personified. He could not have been nicer if he had been a six-to-four on the field merchant collecting "a bit of old."

He said: "Would you like to go on a motor or on my coach?"

Having neither been to Brighton on a motor, nor had the delight of coaching thither with dear old Jim Selby handling the ribands, I replied:

"Well, suppose we go by coach?"

The chairman rejoined, "Do, and when we stop at Reigate for lunch, you can, if you like, get on board one of the motor cars."

I thanked him effusively, and asked him to be good enough to give us cards for seats on the coach, which he thereupon did.

I then returned to my friends, and said:

"Now, if you have quite done eating and drinking, perhaps you will follow me."

I suggested to my millionaire friend that he should take a box-seat, but he declined, afraid of being lonely, and said:

"No, let us sit together."

I showed the coachman our cards, and we took the allotted seats. We were more fortunate than a number of gentlemen who came forward to claim their seats and found them occupied.

At length the flag fell, and our coach led the way.

For some time I personally felt all over like a sort of H.R.H., especially when the coach was cheered by the populace and we bowed and removed our hats.

The journey to Reigate, so far as we were concerned, was devoid of interest, and we thanked our stars we had chosen the coach. Several of the motor cars had not the same manners as the horses we were driving, as they wanted to go opposite ways, and a lot of them broke down at Brixton.

However, *we* arrived at Reigate all right, and, alighting, went into the good Old Bear.

I asked the waiter, in my most patrician manner, the way to the luncheon-room.

"Are we right for the luncheon?" were my words.

"Oh no, sir, not that room. *This* way, please. *Your* special lunch is in a private room."

We followed our meek and lowly guide, and sat down once more to a sumptuous spread.

After enjoying an excellent repast with superior wine, enlivened with epigrams, in which the remark of the millionaire:—"Of all the dam cheek in the world this takes the Buszard"—was prominent, the door was opened, and the party for whom the luncheon had been specially provided, walked into the room, evidently astounded at perceiving the apartment already occupied. I said:

"Sit down, gentlemen. This is a most excellent luncheon they have provided for us; but I am afraid



we have not done justice to it, having previously had such a capital breakfast in town."

They sat down without a word, and I did not think it necessary to wait until a reply was forthcoming. It was time, as I suggested to my friends, to consider whether we should motor to Brighton or re-occupy the coach. The coach won it. So we duly restored ourselves to our seats, and asked the coachman if he was ready. I also suggested that, as one or two of the passengers had not come out from lunch, they evidently intended to travel by motor.

I thought it was time to be off. He agreed, and so, with a hey! hey! hey! the break was released, and away we went.

The entertainment which the road afforded consisted in watching bicycles hurrying along, and motor cars stopping—they were good at that, in fact one of them stopped the coach to ask if we could not let them have some matches—varied with an occasional drink at the different change-houses, until we arrived at Brighton without any mishap, about the hour of seven.

We thanked the good coachman and the guide for our pleasant journey, and got off at the Brighton Metropole, where I inquired of the hotel porter, if any motor cars had arrived.

He replied, "I think two, sir, but it's odds on the old-fashioned coach."

I added, "Is there anything on when they arrive?"

He said, "Oh, yes, there's a big feed in the banquetting hall."

I asked if he could send any one to take us there, and this was the only shilling tip I parted with, and we strolled into the place where dinner was to be held,

and speeches delivered as to the future of motor *versus* horseflesh.

I asked the attendant where the wash-up place was, and then, after ablutions, and — I suggested to my friends, since we were well in it, it was good business to join the banqueters in case of accidents. We thereupon wandered into the reception room, and were well met by many familiar faces which made us feel quite at home.

The gong sounded for dinner. We had a magnificent repast, occasionally interrupted by speeches from gentlemen who evidently had a liberal idea of how much they were going to ask the public to subscribe, when, looking at my watch, I found that it was nearly ten. I asked the gentleman in the chair at the bottom of our table, whether there was any special motor car train back to town? He said there was, but we must be moving as it left Brighton at ten.

"I believe," he added, "there is a 'bus outside for those who are for town."

We hurried off, and got to the station, when my friend the millionaire insulted me, as I thought, with the question :—

"What about our tickets? You may bluff them at the hotel, but you cannot come it here."

I remained dumb but dignified.

"Are we in time?" I said to the ticket collector.

"I mean for the motor car special? I am afraid I have lost it. These are my two friends."

All this was said on the rush. They kept close to me, you bet. We took "the barrier" in our stride, and were presently seated in a Pullman.

The millionaire said :—

"'Swears,' we shall get into trouble here, I feel it."

I said, "I feel nothing, except that we are not being treated properly," and thereupon I rang the bell.

The attendant of the car responded, and I said with severity :—

"Surely to goodness they have not forgotten to put the drinks in."

He said, "No, sir, what will you take?"

My friends for the moment reassured, and I myself refreshed, I began to talk with the other gentlemen about what they thought of the motor cars they had seen on the road to Brighton.

What was their opinion I never knew, for at that moment the engine's top note sounded, and we were on our road to town.

Enter the guard to collect the tickets.

It would have made you roar had you seen the blank faces of my two friends. However, there was a lot of tickets to collect before the man came to us, and I awaited developments.

One unfortunate member of the press, when asked for his brief, searched his pockets but could not find it.

Another passenger was in the same fix. This was joy—and, my opportunity. I immediately went up to the guard with the air of one in authority, and in my most impressive manner, said :—

"This trip has cost us from first to last an enormous sum of money, and we cannot have any intruders. Those persons who have not been provided with the right tickets have got to pay."

Touching his hat the guard said, "Your orders, sir, shall be carried out."

The gentleman paid for his ticket, and the guard

having collected all round, accosted my dismal-looking friends.

I said, "All right! These gentlemen are with me."

To their relief the guard then left the car.

To my relief the sufferer who had paid for his ticket found it in the lining of his hat.

I apologised for having doubted him, called the guard, and saw the money refunded.

We arrived in town without any further adventure, and leaving the train, repaired to refresh at Victoria Station.

I looked at my millionaire friend and said :

"I think I have won my wager : kindly part."

He parted, saying :—

"Of all the feats of audacity I ever witnessed, this takes it."

## CHAPTER XI

### A Sensible Marriage.

A BARONET, well known as a man about town some time ago, sent me a wire one day, which read thus:—  
“Dear Old Sport, I must see you this afternoon to consult you on a matter of great emergency.” I accordingly went to see him, and his first words were, “Look here, ‘Swears,’ I positively must have some money. The exchequer is running very low indeed. I find the Duchess is very expensive, more so than keeping race-horses, although they eat their heads off, God knows. My Phyllis clears my pockets out, and what’s to be done?”

“Well, dear old soul, have you many kites flying about?” I asked.

“No, not a great lot,” was his reply, and added, “You know my trustees settled last year that big loan with the Piccadilly fellow.”

“Oh,” I replied, “I suppose if any one went and asked him he would say it was all right. I see no reason why he should not.” And after a moment’s thought I added, “I tell you what. Let me go and interview him and see what can be done.”

This was agreed upon, and after a long consultation with the gentleman who preferred to lend his money at 60 per cent. to losing his character and only getting

five, it was settled that he would lend my friend £10,000 on a bill at six months, with the stipulation that he should have his own price. I then hied me to my friend's house and acquainted him with what I had done, and after a cosy little dinner together, of which the Duchess also partook, it was arranged that we should all three repair to the generous money-lender's office at two o'clock on the morrow. During the few minutes allowed us by the lady for a cup of coffee and the usual men's gossip, my friend said to me :—

“Look here, old Sport, I don't want the Duchess to come with us into the money-lender's office to-morrow. If she does, a devil of a little of this £10,000 shall I be able to keep to myself. How shall I manage, eh?”

“Well!” I said, “ask her to go down with us and wait for you in the hotel opposite, while we negotiate the business.”

Accordingly, next day saw us all three packed into the usual victoria (7s. 6d. an hour, and 5s. for the coachman finding his own gloves) proceeding westward. But the Duchess's parting request, as she alighted from the carriage to await our return, was as follows :—

“Dear Charlie, if you touch, wave your handkerchief when you come out ; it will make me so happy for all our sakes.” And Charlie obediently promised to do as she asked.

Shylock received us after the manner of his kind. There was the inevitable pint and cigars, talk about the weather, and what horse would win the Leger ; then negotiations were entered upon, completed, and the Baronet signed his promising bill of exchange.

Shylock now began to write out the cheque, and asked what bank he should draw it on.

"May I speak to my friend privately for a second?" said the Baronet, drawing me into a corner.

"Now, if this is paid into Cox's they will deduct from it a thousand that I owe them," was what he conveyed to me in a whisper.

"Well, then," I replied, after a moment's thought, "ask the man where he banks, and cross the cheque at that bank. I'll tell you why after."

Shylock gave Coutts's as the name of his bank, in reply to the Baronet's interrogation, who promptly said, "That'll do for me. Cross it Coutts's." And after wishing the money-lender good-bye, we retired.

Going downstairs the Baronet said to me, "I say, 'Swears,' I want time to reflect. I'm not going to wave my handkerchief, for if I do she'll know that we have touched. Come along, let's hurry out." We did so, took the first cab we saw, and drove to Coutts's. Just as we got there the Baronet cried:—

"Why, what's the use of coming to a bank with a crossed cheque? They won't give me notes for it."

"No, you silly goose," I replied, "but if you send in your card and see the manager, I don't think he will refuse your opening an account with them for £10,000, and instead of taking the usual day to clear the cheque, it will probably be done in five minutes."

The manager was, as I had foreseen, delighted to see the Baronet and open an account with him.

"Well! Now how do I stand regarding drawing?" queried my friend.

"You are in a position to draw from one thousand up to ten thousand out of your account," replied the manager of the bank.

The Baronet needed no second invitation. He promptly drew a cheque for £1000 and we left the bank with the spoil. As we retraced our steps he said, "Now, I've been thinking it all out—about the Duchess, I mean. If she finds out, which she must do eventually, that I've got this £10,000, she will never leave me until she has obtained the major portion of it. Now," he continued, "I may be a bit of a fool at times, but a brilliant idea has struck me, and I'll tell you what it is, 'Swears.' I shall marry her. I'll marry the Duchess and keep the money in the family."

And he did by special license the following day.

**The Value of  
Naughty  
Books.**

Now that was what I call a sensible marriage, but the yarn I am about to relate concerns what would have been a foolish matrimonial venture had it not been broken off by the merest accident. The lover was a boy in the Household Cavalry, such a bright, good-looking youth, popular with his brother-officers and an especial favourite with the ladies; it is almost unnecessary to add that when he became of age he would have a large fortune, and also had a chance of succeeding to an old title. In due course, at some dinner or dance, Harry, let us call him, met Mrs Ondine. Twenty years ago everybody who was anybody knew this little woman, and there would have been no need for me to further particularise her, but every five years, they tell me, a new generation springs up, and the boys of to-day know not Jessie Ondine. Mrs Ondine was supposed to be a widow. She was undoubtedly pretty, petite, and any age up to thirty-five; she was generally considered good fun



not in great request as a chaperone for young women, but always ready to take pity on any lonely young guardsman who wanted a companion for dinners, suppers, theatres, and music halls. To sum up, had she been about since Pinero produced *The Second Mrs Tanqueray*, she would have been described as a lady with a past; as it was, she was somewhat cold shouldered by cautious matrons, and voted a good sort by all her male friends, particularly boys, of whom she was uncommonly fond.

Of course, some of we older men knew all about Jessie Ondine, how she lived, where she came from, and the havoc she had in her time wrought with the pockets and hearts, particularly pockets, of her admirers. Among these well-informed elders was a brother-officer of Mrs Ondine's particular boy of the moment. I fancy he had in the days gone by been an admirer of the boy's mother, anyhow, he was uncommonly fond of the youngster, and did his best to keep him out of mischief. Like the rest of us he only smiled when he heard the boy rave about Jessie, and probably thought that he was doing less harm spending his money on the owner of the tiny little villa at Brompton, than if he were supporting a star of the music halls with a family of harpies sponging on him.

A bolt from the blue, however, was the announcement made to him one day that his protégé meant to marry Mrs Ondine. He begged, prayed, threatened, expostulated, and went to the Colonel, all no good. He then consulted me, and I have rarely seen a man so upset; unfortunately I could not suggest any way out of the trouble, for although we all knew what the lady was, it was difficult to

prove this to a headstrong boy who fancied he was in love with her. Eventually he decided to interview the lady, whom he knew slightly, and see if an appeal to her to give up the boy for the sake of the mother would have any effect. From what I knew of Mrs Ondine I doubted his success, and was therefore agreeably surprised to hear from one of his brother-officers that the match was off, and that the "boy" had gone away on leave.

It was some time before I met the boy's champion, and on seeing him, was beginning to congratulate him on his success. "Devil a bit," interrupted he. "I couldn't do any good with her, she fought like a she-devil, swore she would never give him up for a dozen mothers, and finally ordered me out of the house. I never saw a little woman in such a passion, whether it was real or simulated. Well, I came back, walking down the Brompton Road, and by a piece of luck, why or wherefore I know not, I stopped at a second-hand book shop—you know I'm a bit of a collector of old books and prints—I was fuming and cursing and turning over some volumes, when I came across a number of French books; they were a hot lot, I can tell you, and I was just wondering how any bookseller dare expose them for sale, even though they were in a foreign language. By the merest accident I saw on the title page of one the name of our lady friend, 'Jessie Ondine,' in presumably her own handwriting, and the same name was on the fly-leaf of every one. I bought the blessed lot, jumped into a cab, and drove straight to young hopeful. I needn't trouble you with what followed, but he knows French a trifle better than you do, 'Swears,' and he finally came to the conclusion that the late owner of

the literary filth was not the sort he could instal in the family castle."

I learned later that Mrs Ondine, feeling sure of her marriage, meant turning over a new leaf in more senses than one, and presented the books to her maid, who promptly sold them to the nearest bookseller. Moral, always burn pornographic books when you have no further use for them.

**A Chilly Ghost.** This is a ghost story without a ghost worth speaking of. A lady who was making her first visit to a country house was, without her knowledge, put into a spare room, which, from what she heard over the dinner table, might easily have been the haunted chamber of the mansion. Possibly when she retired, her head was full of ghost stories, but certainly in the middle of the night she awoke with that uncomfortable feeling that many of us have experienced of somebody being in the room. She did not shriek or endeavour to raise an alarm, but, womanlike, carefully fainted. On coming to, she felt uncommonly cold, but there was certainly nobody in the room, and she went placidly off to sleep again. In the morning, at breakfast, sitting next to a man whom she had not seen before, he having arrived late on the previous evening, he remarked on the coldness of the weather, and asked her whether she had noticed how the temperature had fallen in the middle of the night. Naturally she had, and he went on to say, "I felt awfully cold, but I know the house very well, having stayed here so often. There is a spare room next to mine, so I got up and went and stripped the bed of all its clothes."

**Gone to the  
Dogs.**

One of the most impecunious members of the British peerage once possessed a pack of hounds, the feeding and keep of which gave him considerable concern. His credit, always at the lowest ebb, was at its worst on his native heath, otherwise his paternal estates in Ireland. For a long time the poor dogs had come off very badly, and at last the steward interviewed the Marquis as to what was to be done. According to the ancient retainer's report, all channels of credit were closed, and unless the few hunters his lordship possessed were killed and boiled down, it looked very much as if the pack would have to eat one another. Butcher and cornchandler were all reported as hopeless, and the only tradesman at all likely to give further credit was the baker and confectioner of the neighbouring town. "Very well," said his lordship, rising and putting an end to the conference; "feed them on spongecakes."

**A Smart  
Volunteer  
Officer.**

Non-efficiency in volunteers has sometimes had as important results in peace as in war time. We have lately heard a great many grumbles at the authorities declining the services of good men for trifling defects. But I can recollect an instance in which a volunteer brought his commanding officer to reason. The civilian soldier was a solicitor, and however good he may have been in his profession, he was certainly not very efficient as an officer. So bad, indeed, was he that the colonel instructed his adjutant to write to the solicitor and suggest that he should resign his commission. The colonel was doubtless a smart officer, but he was

at all times very impecunious. Knowing this, the solicitor lieutenant hunted up some of his creditors and promptly served him with a writ in bankruptcy, he acting as their legal adviser. I need hardly say that the lieutenant did not resign his commission.

**Reviling their  
Ancestors.** In fiction and in fact the heir-at-law who despises the portraits of his ancestors is a well-known character, from Charles Surface to the present time. Most spendthrifts have an ardent desire to turn their canvases into cash, but I know a few who vented their spleen upon their forefathers by damaging their presentments. It used to be the favourite after-dinner pastime of an Irish peer and his brother to throw crusts of bread, and even salt-cellars, at the family pictures hung round the dining-room. As each missile was shied, they used to enumerate the particular burden the original ancestor had saddled the estate with. These battered portraits are still hanging in the baronial halls, and presumably were never masterpieces, otherwise they would have been sold rather than pelted.

## CHAPTER XII

The Sisters  
Leamar.

IN the days when the Sisters Leamar were drawing all London to the Royal Music Hall, among many of their admirers was a young gentleman whom I will call Bertie. This young man afterwards came to unutterable grief over a card scandal, but this, as Mr Kipling says, is another story which I will tell later. The Sisters Leamar were married, one to the son of a peer, and the other, Kitty—the cleverer and prettier of the two—to a low comedian, also on the music halls. Billy, as he was called, was very devoted to his wife, and like most uxorious husbands, rather bored her. She was always game for a little bit of fun and dearly loved to go out to lunch and dinner, especially if she were unaccompanied by her husband. My young friend Bertie, knowing this, hit upon a scheme by which the absence of Billy from London might be assured, for one afternoon at least. One day Billy received a letter, apparently from a gentleman at Southsea, enclosing a post-office order for two guineas, the letter being to the effect that the writer, having heard of him as a vocalist, and giving an At Home on a certain afternoon at Southsea, requested him to come down and give them a specimen of his ability. He enclosed the two guineas on account, and hoped

he would see the singer at his house in Paradise Crescent, specifying a certain train for him to take from Victoria. His dutiful wife saw him off from the station, Bertie meanwhile waiting outside in a brougham, in which he escorted the fair Kitty to luncheon. Billy returned in the evening, and amused us all by his adventures at Southsea in search of Paradise Crescent, which presumably only existed in the imagination of Bertie. The Sisters Leamar were in those days singing 'a duet, the words and chorus of which ran, as far as I can remember :—

“ Nellie for once let me commence,  
 The story I'm going to sing—  
 Oh, don't make a fuss,  
 You're old enough to fasten a nursery pin.  
 Oh, pity me Nell, my thoughts are sad,  
 I scarce know what to do.  
 I've broken my vow, I've lost my name,  
 And what's a poor girl to do.

Better inform your father,  
 Won't he be angry, rather,  
 Nothing conceal,  
 Say how you feel,  
 Tell him the truth,  
 Mention your youth,  
 Don't be a dunce,  
 Tell him at once,  
 Go and inform your father.”

The card scandal Bertie was mixed up in has been partly related by the late Mr Montagu Williams in a series of articles he wrote for a defunct publication, but the true facts of his career as a card-sharper may not be uninteresting. For years the young man in question had been a member of some of the best

An Orleans  
 Club Scandal.

Clubs, and his losses at cards in some of these establishments were notorious. Curiously enough, however, when his friends played with him at his own rooms, he was always the winner. Some of these friends happened to compare notes, and they discovered that during the time he was a member of a certain club he must have won from them something like fifty thousand pounds. That is to say, this was the amount that had been paid him, to divide amongst strangers whom they had met at his rooms, and who won their money. The matter was brought before the committee of the Orleans Club, who called upon Bertie for an explanation. None was forthcoming, although a late member of the Club, now deceased, and Fatty Coleman, besought him with tears in their eyes to appear before the Committee and defend himself. Even Fatty's expressed wish to make a statutory declaration of the innocence of his friend had no effect with the Committee, who expelled Bertie from the Club.

Some years before this exposure, the well-known sportsman who invented the phrase "You bet your best boots and snowshoes," a man who never played cards, was invited by Bertie to dine with him one night at Boodles'. On arriving at the Club he was handed a note from Bertie saying that he (Bertie) was indisposed, and would he mind coming on to his rooms to dine there, instead of at the Club. "F" went on there, and was introduced to several men he did not know, including one whose name was given him as "Captain Percy." "F" dined well, and although, as I have said, he never was a card player, he backed Bertie with the result that he lost about £1700 during the evening, and for this he



gave his host a cheque. On the following afternoon, walking up Bond Street with a friend, he nodded to a man who was passing.

"Gracious," said his companion, "you don't know that man?"

"Yes, I do," replied "F," "he's Captain Percy of the Guards; met him last night at a card-party! lucky beggar won over a thousand off me."

To make a long story short, his friend got from him all particulars, and informed him that the man he called Captain Percy was no other than one who had been expelled from a Club for cheating at cards, and insisted upon his stopping the cheque he had given overnight to Bertie. This cheque was of course never paid to Bertie, who never claimed it from "F."

For many months—I may say almost years—"F" proclaimed this fact on the housetops, but Bertie was then an intimate friend of several prominent politicians and noblemen, and they all thought "F" was romancing.

It turned out afterwards that Bertie's mode of procedure was to ask Club friends to his rooms, where they met strangers who were introduced to them as either Admirals, Generals, Colonels or Captains. *Ecarté* was the game usually played, and Bertie's guests from his club invariably backed him, he having the worst of luck. These proceedings he had been carrying on for many years at Nice and Brighton, as well as London. Bertie, however, was not a lucky player without confederates, and, as I have said, in Clubs he always lost money; on one occasion, at the old Argus Club, losing at one sitting £10,000.

Not a Bad  
Sort.

Before his expulsion from the Orleans Club, I had an experience of his good nature which is worth recording, if only to show that even card-sharpers can do one a good turn now and then. He was one winter at Monte Carlo, where all the time his luck was as bad as it usually was at the clubs. I was there, and had also had a bad time, indeed I had the greatest difficulty to pay my hotel bill each week with remittances sent me from home. As a rule every Monday morning I received sufficient money to pay my week's bill, and usually it was promptly paid before going out, knowing that if I did not do this I should in all probability leave it in the gambling-rooms. One Monday morning, as ill luck would have it, the postman and my precious letter did not arrive until late. I met him on the hill coming up to the hotel, signed his receipt, and instead of returning to the hotel and settling my account, I foolishly went on to the Casino, where, needless to say, I lost the lot that same afternoon. In the evening, a pouring wet night, I remember, I bade good-night to Bertie, who was staying at the Hotel de Paris, and wended my way home to bed. On arriving at the hotel I found my bedroom locked against me, and was informed that the patron had retired for the night, my key was under his pillow, and would remain there until I paid my bill. Threats and expostulations were of no use; the patron remained firmly tucked up in his bed, and I turned out into the wet night to find Bertie, whom I knew had enough ready money. I did not know his number at the Hotel de Paris, neither did the hall-porter. I had, however, been once to his room, and thought I

could find my way. In the dark corridors I knocked at several wrong doors, generally being received with showers of boots and bad language. Luckily I found Bertie at last, who very kindly, although short himself, lent me the lousie required. The last I heard of Bertie was when he turned up some years ago at the Northern Club at Auckland, New Zealand, and with his usual fascinating manners made many friends. One of these invited him to a dance given by his mother, and at this dance he was recognised by an Englishman, who, of course, spread the story of his cheating in England, and he had to leave both the Northern Club and New Zealand.

**A Poacher.** A young friend of mine, whom I will call Parkyns, because it isn't anything like his real name, once picked up what he called "a good thing." This was his coarse way of describing a fair lady, whose brougham he was fortunate enough to find on a rainy night outside the Gaiety Theatre. So pleased was the lady with Parkyns' manners that she invited him home to sup at her residence in Regent's Park, explaining that she was afraid her husband would not be at home to do the honours of the house, as he had been suddenly summoned to look after "some silly regimental duties at Aldershot." Parkyns, who was always polite, assured his fair acquaintance that though he deeply regretted the absence of the warrior he would endeavour to make himself at home with her.

Three-quarters of an hour later Parkyns and his charming hostess were just sitting down to a tempting little supper, whereat plovers' eggs, lobster mayonnaise, cutlets en aspic, and Russian salad, were guarded by

a noble Magnum of Pol Roger, when there was heard the grating of a latch-key followed by the sound of boots in the hall. The lady turned as pale as she possibly could, but had presence of mind enough to whisper to her guest, "What's your name?" Parkyns, feeling very uncomfortable, told her just as the door was flung open, and in stalked a great full moustached man.

"My dear Topsy, I've got back after all," he began, and then stopped suddenly, perceiving Parkyns. The lady threw herself into the giant's arms and covered him with kisses, a sight which sickened Parkyns more than ever.

"Oh, my darling Gus," she cooed, "I had a presentiment you'd come home, and so I asked my cousin, Freddy Parkyns, to come and meet you." Here she indicated Parkyns.

"Delighted to know you, Mr Parkyns," said the giant, extending a hand like a porterhouse steak, which gripped like an Octopus. "Order some more plates, Topsy, and let's have supper! I'm as hungry as a hunter. And let's have plenty of fizz. Have a nip of this old peach brandy to begin with, Mr Parkyns."

I had better continue the story in Parkyns' own words:—

"I never met such a jolly chap. He swore he could detect a distinct likeness between Topsy and myself. By the way," he said, "I don't remember seeing you at our wedding."

"No!" I replied, "I was abroad at the time." At this he roared with laughter and nearly choked himself with a half a pigeon which he was crunching between his great white teeth. Topsy patted him

on the back, looking, I thought, rather frightened. I needn't tell you all we ate and drank. Suffice it to say everything was of the best. Gus got out a bottle of '64 brandy and a box of Rothschild cigars as long as barge-poles. Topsy sang us two or three songs, and we had a very merry time of it. About one o'clock I said I must be going.

"Well, if you must—you must," said Gus, "but have a 'deuchandoris' and another weed to carry you home. Mind if you're ever up this way look us up. By the way, do you spell your name with a 'y' or an 'i.'"

I told him truthfully with a "y."

"And what's your club?" he asked, beaming kindly on me.

At a shot I answered the Junior Carlton.

"By Jove, that's funny," he chortled, "I'm a member too. I'll use it now more than I generally do."

Well, I said good-night to the beautiful Topsy. By George! what eyes she had! like black diamonds! Gus helped me on with my coat, I lighted my cigar, and when he'd opened the door we stood for a moment looking out.

"It's cleared up," he said. "You'll find a cab-stand round the corner."

I noticed then that there were five or six steps to go down to the pavement.

"You'd better turn up your trousers," said Gus, "it's sloppy down there."

Scarcely had I stooped to do so when I felt—No! I can't tell you what I felt, but I fell heavily in the muddy road-way, while a terrible voice behind me thundered—

"You sanguinary young scamp, don't you ever come poaching in my preserves again!"

Then the door was slammed. A charitable policeman picked me up and I was taken home in a four wheeler. I could not walk for a month. I'm pretty sure that chap Gus must have been a nailing good football player in his time."

## CHAPTER XIII

**Retribution.** THERE was a ring at my door one day. "Ah! perhaps here we have some one of the fair sex for a cup of afternoon tea." I answered it myself, to find a specially seedy old piece of masculine humanity.

"Is your name Swears?"

"That is my name," I replied.

"Can I speak with you a minute?" With that he shuffled in and shut the door. I knew.

"I 'as come down at the suit of Mr So-and-So, and I 'as an execution. Is you prepared to pay, because if you ain't I sits here until I gets horders from the 'ed offis to take me 'ook, guv'nor."

I invited him in, and taking him to my dining and drawing room, gave him a seat, and having met those gentlemen before, generously asked him what he would have by way of liquid refreshment.

"Gin, sir," said he. I thought as much from the bouquet about him, so I placed the bottle beside him, and a soda water syphon. Pouring out a generous half tumblerful of the unsweetened, and squirting into it a dash of the soda, he said:—

"Guv'nor."

"Yes," I said.

"Guv'nor," said he, "these are mournful visits, ain't they?"

I said, "Yes, for me. I don't know how they are to you."

"Oh," said he, brightening up with gin, "I 'ave 'ad to make some queer visits in my time. Don't be down-hearted. I pays visits to some of the 'ighest in the land. Lord, you would be surprised, you would. Lord, if you only knew. They've dressed me up as a footman many a time. (A charwoman, I reflected, and you would have looked the part more). Now don't you be down 'earted, guv'nor. Don't you be cross,"—then he retackled the gin. "May I look round your apartments? 'Ow many parts might you be 'aving now, guv'nor?"

I told him.

"Where might I be goin' to sleep to-night?"

"Where you're sitting," I said. "I'm going out for dinner now."

"Are you, now," said the autumnal, gin-steeped veteran.

"I am."

"I could do a pick myself," said he.

"I dare say you could," I remarked.

Returning from a chop at the Café, I found my humble visitor still in possession. His abject miserableness touched me, and I lent him a rug for the night; I even went the length of lending him one of my pillows.

Next morning my man came into my room and said:—

"Guv'nor, you've a visitor in the next room. Who is he? Wots he doing here; any trouble?"

"No, my dear George," I replied, "the natural extravagance of debt has brought me my just reward—an execution."

"An execution, guv'nor; you're not going to be hung?"

"No, not yet, but unless I can pay £44 to my



wine merchant, whose merchandise we have enjoyed, I look like being sold up."

"Good Lord! I say, he ain't a been in your wardrobe, has he?"

"No, George, I am not quite daft, when he was in the sitting-room I turned the box room key and took it out."

"Oh," said George, greatly relieved, "*that's* all right. Well, guv'nor, as the furniture don't belong to you, bein' on the hire system—and you're a bit in arrears with them—the great thing is to get your clothes out. Believe me, guv'nor, a gent's no good unless he dresses well. If you dress well, guv'nor, you'll always get invited out to dinner. or lunch, or sumthink. They *do* judge a man by his clothes, nowadays, don't they?"

"Well, I suppose they do, George. What's going to be done? There is one thing about me, I can't borrow."

"You can't borrow, can't you? The great thing is to find some one to lend. I have an idea. You go and keep the old man company while I go out for a minute or two. When I open the door, you come out, and I'll tell you my plan."

"Well, lodger," I said to the veteran, entering the dining-room, "and how did you sleep?"

"Well, I dunno; perhaps it was your 'ard pillow, but I 'as a thirst on me that would dry up the river Thames. Might I be introodin' on yer generosity, guv'nor, if I asked you to hallow me to 'elp myself?"

At intervals I conversed with the miserable old buffer as I read my morning paper, then I heard the door open and shut. Out I went, as per arrangement with George.

"I have been to see the landlord," said George

jubilantly, "an' I have confided your troubles in him, and as the opposite flat is to let and is empty, I have asked him to let his man come round with me to remove your clothes and put them in there, and he has consented, guv'nor. WE'RE SAVED! You keep the old bloke in conversation; half-an-hour will conclude my hoperations."

In half-an-hour's time, George, true to his word, came into the room looking very bright, and told me it was all right.

"George," I said, "get me a nice breakfast—fried bacon, eggs, coffee, and bread and butter. And, George, see that the bacon is lean and nicely frizzled; not too much frizzle, you know, but just frizzle enough." (I could see the mouth of the poor old man in possession water, as he heard the list.)

"Guv'nor," said he, "this is an unthankful offis. I 'ave been in cribs where grub was plentiful. . . Would I be introodin' on your generosity if I hasked might I be 'aving a bite, guv'nor?"

"There is enough for one," I said austere, "and not enough for two, and therefore there is no use spoiling my appetite for the sake of yours; I am afraid that unless you are provided with food you will have to go very hungry. Regarding your thirst, which you assure me is great, as you have emptied the bottle you will have to content yourself with the waterworks."

While reading the paper, and pretending to enjoy my breakfast—an effort—I could not help feeling very sorry indeed for the poor old chap with the "unthankful offis." After the things had been cleared away, and while he gazed wistfully at a piece of bread and butter that had been left, he said to me suddenly.—

"Guv'nor," said he in tones of most abject melancholy. "Guv'nor, I was born under an unlucky star."

"Were you ; why ?"

"Well," he said, "I had a row with another fellow, because I wouldn't go to an execution at Bayswater, because, said I, it's too far away. 'Ad I gone there, there was plenty of grub. I took this 'ere job and get none. Hexcuse me, guv'nor, if I happear familiar, but I feel hawful 'ungry. Will you give me your solemn word of honour thet hif I goes out to 'ave a bite o' grub, you will let me in again ?"

With the sternest aspect and the sternest tone I could command—awesome manifestations both—I thundered :—

"Look you here, sir, there is no honour in this flat." And I dared him to go out on his own peril.

He didn't.

The sequel is brief, and very, very sad indeed.

After my friends had rallied round me, and I had got rid of the abnoxious man in possession, I made tracks to the landlord for the key to remove my clothes from the empty flat.

"Very sorry, Mr Swears," said the landlord, "but as your rent is now due, and as I see no chance of getting it, until you pay me £27 your clothes remain where they are."

**Soixante Neuf.** The wrath of a woman scorned is very bitter, but that of the deceived wife usually far more so. A very good fellow, known to many of us, possessed a wife who had not only a very jealous disposition, but was also cursed with a very violent temper, which at times took the form of severely castigating her spouse with a big stick.

Goodness knows, he gave her cause enough for jealousy. He was extremely popular in Society, and had any number of invitations to big country houses. Some of these were for the week-end only, and on these occasions there is very little doubt he took advantage of such short absences from home to deceive his *exigeante* better half. Perhaps she had given indications of being more suspicious than usual, for going away for a few days without her, he took the precaution of writing from Brighton, where he really was staying—not alone—to the postmaster of the town near the house where he was supposed to be visiting, and enclosed him a letter to his wife, which he asked him to forward. He was, of course, not aware that the regulations of the post office did not permit of their officials undertaking matters of this sort, and if he had known that his letter was endorsed by the postmaster to the effect that it was forwarded by the desire of Mr So-and-So of Brighton—which gave the whole show away—he naturally would never have sent it. On his return home, he was received with extra urbanity on the part of his spouse, and when she proposed that she should unpack his portmanteau rather than leave it to the servant, he had no misgivings on the subject. A few minutes later, he was undeceived, for his wife rushed into the room holding up a pair of boots, on the soles of which was marked with chalk in large figures, the number 69. Mad with rage, she wanted to know if his supposed host, Lord Tantivy, had sixty-nine bedrooms in his shooting-box, and receiving no satisfactory reply, began one of her usual furious attacks.

*Moral.*—Shake the chalk from the soles of your boots when leaving a strange hotel.

## CHAPTER XIV

**Hebrew stories.** IT had been my original intention to have devoted a chapter to "chestnuts" told me by Jews, mainly about themselves, but as Miss Connie Ediss sings, "they all came out in the wash." So much depends on the way these stories are given; the yarn told with unctuous humour in a pronounced Yiddishir dialect, which fills us with delight, looks very different in cold type. I have therefore made no attempt either to put my Hebrew "chestnuts" in one basket or to convey by quaint orthography the inimitable manner in which the stories were originally told.

**Youm Kippur yarns.** Here are some stories about Youm Kippur, known to most Christians as the Black Fast. During this fast, strict Jews attend their synagogue, and for a number of hours take no refreshment whatever. One of the commonest forms of keeping up their spirits indulged in by the male Jews, is that of taking snuff, and during the pauses of their mumblings they frequently refresh themselves with pinches of Taddy. One ancient Israelite, after helping himself to snuff, handed the box to his neighbour who, being possibly a stricter Hebrew, declined the proffered stimulant.

"Vell," said the offerer of the delicacy, "if you won't snuff, vill you buy the box?"

On another occasion, during the same fast, one of the worshippers dropped a coin which, with much noise, rolled through the hot air grating. As at these times, Hebrews are forbidden to touch money, the doorkeeper was deputed to find the missing piece of money. He did so, and after the service sought for the loser. There were many claimants, none of whom had lost less than half-a-sovereign. As he had only recovered a halfpenny, I'm afraid somebody was lying.

At the same synagogue one of the fasting Hebrews suddenly remembered that he had left the keys of the safe in his office, and mentioned the fact to his neighbour, asking his advice as to what he should do, as he did not wish to imperil his future salvation by abandoning his prayers.

"Don't worry yourself," said his friend, "all your clerks are here."

Curses come  
home to roost. Certain of the poorer classes of Jewish families, just like Christians, send their dishes to be baked at a general bake-house, and on one occasion a Jewish family received somebody else's *kugel*, a very much finer and larger dish than they had sent to the baker. When sitting down to supper, the father of the family helped his wife first, much to the astonishment of all around the board. The wife remarked:—

"Well, Ike, we've been married seventeen years, and this is the only time you have ever helped me first."

"Yes, my dear," replied her husband, "the owner of this dish has probably said that he hopes the first

mouthful will choke the eater. That's why I gave it to you."

**Old Clo'.** Two sons of a once well-known curiosity dealer in Bond Street, made him a present of a frock-coat suit from Poole's, which had cost them sixteen guineas, but not wishing their father to think them extravagant, they informed him that they had got the coat a bargain for forty-five shillings. The old man himself, always keen for a deal, and not caring much for new clothes—in fact, his shabby raiment was the wonder of his neighbours for many years—came across a man who happened to remark that he was buying himself a frock-coat, and he immediately planted him with the garment for £3, making, as he supposed, a profit of 15s.

**Carriage folk.** The same old man as he became prosperous started a carriage, which was of course a second-hand one. The horse also he hired from a greengrocer, but the latter was not a satisfactory deal, as whenever he went out in the brougham the horse invariably stopped at all the area gates of the customers of the greengrocer. The meanness of this old gentleman may be gauged by the fact that on one occasion when he drove his wife down to Richmond, the coachman suggested that he should give the horse a feed. Before acquiescing, old "Dinks," as he was nicknamed, inquired from the ostler the price, and on learning it, told his coachman to give the animal half a feed.

**Royalty incog.** Sometimes the old dealer came across people who dressed as shabbily as himself, and once he made a great mistake when

an individual came into his shop. This gentleman was the equerry of a well-known Crown Prince, a great collector of pictures and china, but "Dinks" did not know him, and judging by his clothes, did not think much of him. The equerry poked about the shop and was shown several things by the dealer, and on inspecting several of the articles remarked :—

"I have one like that, show me something better."

At length "Dinks" became very impatient and said :—

"Yes, you look as if you had," with other remarks as to his possible impecuniosity. Of course when "Dinks" discovered who he really was, apologies followed, but the Crown Prince and his equerry came no more to the shop in Bond Street.

Another scion of a royal house gave him a commission to purchase a piano, the case of which should be something very wonderful. The piano was duly delivered, but did not please His Royal Highness, who informed him that the article was not at all what he wanted. A good deal of heat was engendered, "Dinks" closing the argument by saying:

"I don't wish to quarrel with you, or any of your family."

**A Memorial  
Stone.**

Two Hebrew men were very great friends, and one dying left the other a bequest of £500, on condition that he put up a memorial stone to his memory. Not long after the funeral, the legatee met the solicitor of his deceased friend, who reproachfully reminded him that he had not yet carried out the request of the deceased.

"Nonsense," replied the Jew, "here is the memorial



stone," pointing to a very magnificent diamond in his scarf. "That is what I have spent Ike's money on."

The children about which the two following stories are told are not, as far as I know, of Hebrew extraction, but they may have been.

**Carte-Blanche** Two little girls were playing at shopkeeping, one being a modiste, and the other representing the customer. The requirements of the customer were evidently on a very extensive scale, for the little shopkeeper said, "You mustn't have any more or your husband will object."

"I beg your pardon," replied the small customer, tossing her head, "my husband has given me Carter Paterson to buy as much as I like."

**A Doll's House.** A little girl was visiting, with her mother, some friends who lived in a flat which was on the fourth storey. They were taken up in the lift, and at length reached their destination, whereupon she turned round to her mother and asked if that was the shelf the Johnsons lived on.

**The Value of Royal Acquaintances.** The following story relates to a very impecunious man. He was staying in a country house, and among the guests was a very eminent personage.

The impecunious gentleman played at cards with this prince and lost £25 to him, for which he promptly gave a cheque on his bankers, well knowing that he had nothing at the bank to meet the cheque with. However, he shrewdly suspected that the bankers, a well-known firm, would think twice

about refusing to cash a cheque for so small an amount, made payable to a Serene Highness. Nor was he wrong in his supposition. His cheque was duly paid. Some short time after, being still in the same moneyless condition, it struck him he might bring off a big coup in a like manner. One day when lunching at the Marlborough Club, he drew an open cheque on the same confiding bankers for £100, payable to His Serene Highness *or bearer*. The commissionaire whom he entrusted with the cheque duly received the cash, and I trust that now the drawer of the cheque has come into a title and estates, the bank will not lose by their confidence.

Never For-  
gotten.

Here is rather an amusing yarn of the confessional. A certain lady went to a priest, and after detailing her indiscretion, asked him to give her absolution for the same. He, however, before doing so, asked her how long a time had passed since the events which she had just related to him at such length. The fair penitent, after a little hesitation, confessed that the whole affair was some thirty-seven years old. "Why, then, my daughter, your sin has long since been forgiven you," said the priest.

"I know, father, but I do so love to talk about it," gushed the dame.

A Blank Week-  
end.

Some time ago it chanced that a theatrical manager asked an author-actor down to Brighton as his guest from Saturday to Monday. The actor accepted with alacrity, and went down with the full intention of borrowing £100 from the manager

before he returned to London. The time passed very quickly, however, and the would-be borrower kept putting off the evil moment, hoping for a more favourable opportunity to prefer his request. When Sunday night came, he decided to leave it till they were returning to town together; they seemed to be getting on so nicely that he did not wish to spoil it. What was his horror and consternation when next morning, in answer to his inquiry for his host the waiter said, "He left, sir, by the early train for town, and said I was to give you this note." The letter ran as follows: "Dear B.—Had to leave early. Kindly pay the bill and let me know what I owe you when we meet in town.—Yours, L."

**A Wasted  
Compliment.**

Benoist's famous *charcuterie* business is world-renowned since he blossomed out in his large shop in Piccadilly, but for many years he carried on his trade in Soho, almost unknown except to chefs. It is some years ago now since a *bon viveur*, who superintended his kitchen himself, was strolling through Soho and espied Benoist's shop quite by accident. "Hullo! A new find," thought he to himself. "I'll investigate this." Thereupon he went in and made a trifling purchase, and not content with this, summoned up his best French in order to compliment the old gentleman behind the counter on opening such a much-wanted shop, and one for which he had long been searching. The proprietor bowed his thanks and said, "Monsieur is very good, but is probably not aware that this business has been established here for nearly thirty years."

Where Ignor-  
ance is Bliss. Some of the earlier residents of Johannesburg were a very illiterate lot, as the following narrative testifies.

One of these same gentlemen was once dining at a big dinner at the Club there. He declined some wine which had been offered to him by his *vis-à-vis*, who immediately said, "Don't refuse that wine, old boy, d'you know it's Johannesburg (hock) '74."

"Go on," replied the wiseacre derisively, "who are you gettin' at? Why, the place wasn't built till '87."

## CHAPTER XV

Lord  
Malmesbury's  
Tailor.

THE late Lord Malmesbury had a great objection to being measured by his tailor, and never used to try his new clothes on ; in fact for many years his tailor had never seen him, as he used to employ a valet about his own height, and sent him to the snip to be measured for his clothes. In the course of time this servant died or retired, and his lordship by accident, wanting some raiment, went to the tailor, who, mistaking him for his servant, said :—

“ Oh, I suppose you are His Lordship's new valet ; well, we must buy you a wire brush. He don't wear his clothes out half quick enough ; he's had nothing new now for some months. You are not a patch on the old valet.”

To the astonishment of the tailor, Lord Malmesbury turned on his heel, and withdrew his custom.

A Drunkard's  
Breakfast.

A well-known Irish peer staying at a country-house did himself remarkably well overnight, and waking up the following afternoon, rang for his servant.

On his appearance he inquired what the time was, and what the rest of the party were doing ? Hearing that they were at breakfast, he asked what they were partaking of ?

"'Addicks and champagne, mi lord," replied the valet.

"Haddocks and champagne! what a drunkard's breakfast! What shall I have, John?"

"'Addicks and champagne, mi lord."

**A  
Photographer's  
Troubles.**

Some people are never satisfied with the best efforts of their photographers. Not long since, I happened to be in attendance on a lady who was extra particular as to how her portrait should be taken. She had a fairly large mouth, and was desirous to diminish it. So anxious was she to make it appear smaller, that at last the operator exclaimed: "If you like, my dear madam, I will take you without any mouth at all."

**Cycling.**

Once when driving a friend towards Richmond in a rather smart cart and pony which I once possessed, he drew my attention to a wheel flying along in front of us.

"Some one has had an accident," said he; and almost before the words were out of his mouth, we discovered that we had had the accident. The wheel belonged to us.

**Born, not  
Made.**

At one time of my life I had a very great notion of starting a proprietary school for boys. With this idea in my mind I waited on a man in business in the city, and explained to him the probability of my making money, as I should get so many pupils from my friends.

His first question was: "What are you going to teach them, 'Swears,'—thieving?"

"No," said I, "there is no need to do that, they inherit it."

**A Dummy  
Brief.**

As a youngster I was in a solicitor's office, and like most boys, always ready to shirk my work. One of our junior barristers was very friendly with me, and on one occasion when I was engrossing a brief for a case that was to be heard next day before Sir George Jessel, the late Master of the Rolls, in which the late Mr Justice Chitty was leading, my friend the junior remarked:—

“Why bother yourself to write all that out? Simply write the front page and endorse the back and give it to me. You can charge the guv'nor so much a folio all the same.”

I promptly acted on the hint, and had a very pleasant evening on the petty cash which I had so easily earned.

When the case came on, by some mistake Mr Chitty got hold of the junior's dummy brief, and before he regained possession of his own there was the devil to pay. I did not engross many more briefs for that firm.

**Speechless but  
Graphic.**

A knowledge of the art of drawing is sometimes very useful. A friend of mine, who is a well-known caricaturist, had done himself very well at a dance, and was being put into a cab by some of us. We none of us knew where he lived, and he himself was more or less speechless. At last, however, he managed to extricate a pencil and a sheet of paper from his pocket, and to our amusement drew a sketch which, when finished, he handed out of the cab. The drawing was a clear sketch of the well-known church steeple in Langham Place. We all recognised it, and, with shrieks of laughter, handed it to the cabman,

who remarked :—"All right, I knows it, Langham Street," and drove off.

A Clever  
Idiot.

Village idiots are sometimes not such fools as they would appear. I came across a lunny once who was remarkably shrewd—in fact he frequently afforded us much amusement in the way he could distinguish between various coins, and we frequently made bets about his capacity in this respect. We once tried him with half-a-crown in one hand, and half-a-sovereign exposed in the palm of the other, and asked him which he would choose. With a grin he chose the half-sovereign. Next time we put a five-shilling piece in one hand and a new farthing in the other. Remarking: "As I wasn't greedy last time, I will be greedy this time," he took the crown piece. Needless to say this method of testing the village idiot was too expensive to be tried often.

Making Love  
on the Tiles.

At the corner of St James's Street, high up above the Post Office, resided Mr Thomas Eaves, man of fashion and *litterateur*, and immediately beneath him Sir Wellington Carlton, who was supposed to have fought at the battle of Waterloo. Sir Wellington, like an old campaigner, was never unready for a little freebooting, and always kept his door open after eleven at night to see what manner of contraband goods was imported into the citadel by the gentleman aloft. One afternoon Tommy Eaves, who resented his guard of honour, approached the baronet and implored him to keep his oak sported that night, as a real live Countess, one of the tenderest susceptibilities, had promised to sup with him on butterflies' wings and nectar after the play, and the least thing



might upset her feelings. Sir Wellington readily pledged his word to keep his portal barred, but being a wicked man, he nevertheless resolved to identify the peccant member of the peerage, and established himself at his usual post of observation. Presently might be heard approaching the shuffling of shoes and the rustling of silken attire. Tommy and his aristocratic prey were at hand. Sir Wellington listened intently, and at last a female voice in panting tones uttered these words:—"Look here, Tommy, do you take me for a black cat and think I want to be made love to on the tiles?"

Sir Wellington shut his door with a bang, and mused on the phraseology of the Upper Ten.

**The Final  
Club**

The old joke of a sporting club in Piccadilly has, I see, been recently revived, the victim being one of the American actors over here. It was, however, started by Uncle Andrew some years ago, who regularly used to introduce his young friends to what he called his "Final Club," which was the Cabmen's Shelter, just outside the Naval and Military Club in Piccadilly. So regular was Uncle in his attendance at any hour between four and eight in the morning, that many cab-drivers used to make a point of taking their early morning coffee about that hour, being sure of a good breakfast at his expense.

**Cherubims  
in Fiji.**

As is well known to many of us, the old Uncle was at one time Chief of the Police in Honolulu, and the King of that Island, with whom Haley was very chummy, suggested that the niggers forming his police guard should be rigged out in uniform. Uncle

promptly sent over to Morris Angel, or some other dealer in old clothes, and procured a consignment of some second-hand uniforms of his old regiment, the 11th Hussars. I am told that on parade these dusky policemen would have delighted the authorities of Scotland Yard and the War Office.

**Doctors' Fees.** Doctors I have not much faith in, especially specialists, although my regular attendant, who is supposed to have seen more of the human form divine of the British aristocracy than any other doctor in Europe, is one of the best of men. As I am always ailing, he is constantly sending me to various specialists. One of these is supposed to be an authority on banting. He, too, was a good fellow, and I spent several very pleasant mornings with him, but in the end I came to the conclusion that he was too intent upon selling me very nasty biscuits at a price per pound dearer than truffles, or loading me up with equally nasty mineral water as expensive as cheap champagne, and quite as unpleasant to take. Another specialist treated me for a throat trouble. The process necessitated my calling on him every morning, and having my throat sprayed, and inhaling some concoction of his. For this he charged me something like half-a-guinea, and at the end of a month all my friends agreed that my voice was no better than when I commenced the treatment. Perhaps they were wrong, but what decided me in not keeping on paying him the three guineas a week, was the fact that one morning when he was very busy with his patients, he, in apologising for keeping me waiting, suggested that his business might be turned with profit into a limited company, adding that with all his patients at half-a-crown a head, he

was making a fortune! Well, thought I, if he is amassing a fortune at half-a-crown a time, what must he be making out of me at half-a-guinea?

“Any excuse is better than none,”  
**Sea Gull Shooting.** is an aphorism that husbands frequently make use of. A married couple I used to stay with at their house reminded me of this. He was a good fellow, and much addicted to all kinds of sport, especially shooting. This pursuit of sport took the course of sea-gull shooting, to do which required him, so he said, to get up very early every morning. At last the wife, who was a very old friend of mine, became somewhat suspicious, and confided to me that she thought her husband was such an early riser because he went to see another lady, and the sea-gull shooting was only an excuse. I endeavoured to show her the folly of her suspicions, but she was not to be persuaded. Said she, “He goes out like this every morning, all the year round; isn’t there a close time for sea-gulls?”

“No,” replied I unthinkingly, “they go on breeding all the year round.”

**Family Affairs.** Lord Y and his son Captain Z were both very kind to the ladies, but they rarely came across one another when on the wing. However, one morning at the Marine Hotel, Cowes, they did, and very luckily for the Captain, as he wanted a bit badly. When the knock with the tea came in the morning, the gallant officer opened the bedroom door to take in the tray. As he did so, the door opposite also opened to admit of similar refreshment, and the taker in was none other than Lord Y. They stared at each other for a few

seconds, then the Captain said, pointing to a dainty pair of bottines alongside of the peer's shoes, "I see you've brought mamma with you. Is her ladyship quite well?"

Lord Y glared at his son. Then his face lighted up.

"Ah!" he said, indicating another pair of dainty bottines drawn up beside the Captain's Russia-leathers. "And you've come to spend your honeymoon, I perceive. Meet me in the coffee-room in half-an-hour, and I'll give you a wedding present."

Nothing like  
Leather.

The late Abington Baird's father was, as is well known, a very ignorant man. On one occasion he had made up his mind to form a library, and as a preliminary step he sent for a bookseller and consulted with him as to what volumes he should buy. In the course of conversation the bookseller said:—

"And how will you have them bound—in Morocco or Russia?"

"Na, na," replied Baird in his broad Scotch, "I mean ta gi'e Glasgie a turn."

## CHAPTER XVI

**About Cheques,  
Stumers, and  
Otherwise.** A VOLUME might with ease be written around cheques, stumer cheques, crossed cheques, forged cheques, and all the varieties of signatures to an order on a bank! One of our best known and most popular of financiers began life with a very small amount of capital, derived, it is said, from dealing in cheap jewellery, but his first real step forward was by the aid of a cheque. When he started lending money he lived in the Bloomsbury district, and his principal clients were young officers and professional men, who merely wanted a few hundreds for a short time. Luckily, however, he came across a young man who had more money than brains, and was quite incapable of adding up a row of figures. So innocent was this young gentleman that he never knew on which side his balance at his bank was, and if he had not time to go and ask the cashier how he stood, he frequently consulted his friends. In due course, our financier was asked by the young man to explain the figures, as from what he could make out he was about £20,000 on the wrong side. The astute money-lender speedily discovered that just the contrary was the case, and, drawing a very long face, offered to assist the ignorant one for a few weeks until his next rents came in.

The "loan" was effected by an exchange of cheques, a transaction which was as nearly as possible lending the borrower his own money at the usual rate of interest.

Carelessness  
led to Forgery. It is curious how careless some rich people are over the state of their banking account. A lady I know who had a considerable income took it into her head to get married. On the return from the honeymoon she went with her husband to her bankers to bring away the chest of plate. While waiting for it to be put on the cab, she remarked to her spouse, "I wonder how much money I have here!"

"Well," said he, "that's easy enough to find out. Ask the cashier. But how much do you think you have?"

"Oh," she replied, "I suppose two or three thousand pounds."

They referred to the bank clerk, who, after consulting various ledgers, informed them that the balance standing to her credit was £1, 3s. 4d. It transpired that the lady's trustee who jointly with her had opened the account, had forged her name to a large amount. Possibly if the lady had never married or never been inquisitive enough to ask about her balance, that trustee might have gone on forging until now.

A Drop in the Ocean. Talking of forgeries, in the days long ago, Mr Henry Labouchere, M.P., although born of financial stock, managed his banking affairs on peculiar principles. In the first place, he never kept any record of what balance he had at the bank, and in the second, he invariably refused to use official cheque forms, but

drew drafts on unstamped sheets of note-paper, "thereby," he pointed out, "practising strict economy. If my creditor wants his money, let him put a penny stamp on my piece of paper ; if he doesn't, let him put it in the fire."

Well, one fine day it was discovered that forged cheques purporting to be signed by "Labby" had been honoured by the bank to the tune of over £10,000. At first the bank tried to make out that their customer was liable because their authorised cheque forms had not been used, but this theory the member for Northampton laughed to scorn. However, at the earnest request of the manager, he agreed to look again very carefully through the pile of forged documents. At the conclusion of the inspection the manager asked anxiously, "Are you certain that you did not sign any of those cheques?"

"No," replied Labby, "I could not take my oath on that point with regard to all."

The manager's face brightened. Thousands of pounds were at stake ; many of the forgeries were for large amounts.

"Which," he asked, "are you uncertain about?"

Labby paused for a minute, and then abstracting two cheques, one for £2 and the other for 30s., he said calmly :—

"I should not like to swear that these were not my signatures."

The manager nearly fainted.

An Innocent  
Holder for  
Value.

Here is another little story about cheques, which I have the word of a city friend of mine is perfectly true. He made the acquaintance of an actress who was certainly very beautiful, but about whose

talent on the stage there was a difference of opinion. She, like the French artiste who was over here not long since, had a great many admirers who paid homage to her charms; but if my friend is to be believed, she was an extremely simple woman in the matter of money, and was quite ignorant of the methods of banking. One day my friend was taking tea with her, and she happening to mention that she was anxious to obtain some article, he volunteered to give her a cheque to enable her to buy it.

"A cheque," said she, with supreme contempt, "no cheques for me, thank you. Look at this," opening a drawer, and pulling out a handful of bank cheques.

My friend did look at them, and saw that they were signed by well-known names, and were anything but stumers. He endeavoured to explain to her that she should open an account at the bank, and put in the little slips of stamped paper which she seemed content to consider of no value. She was not to be convinced until he had taken the cheques to his own bank and opened an account there in her name, when the cheques were duly honoured.

**The Power of Love.** This is not a cheque story, but it is about bank notes, a subject quite as

engrossing, and its hero—well, no, he wasn't quite a hero—was the man who wrote the largest cheque—six figures—ever given by man to woman; a cheque that eclipsed any of Lipton's, and like it, was for Custom's dues, but a tax levied by beauty, not the Government. Soon after, this gentleman got tired of the lady to whom he gave the monster cheque (which was framed and exhibited in



a solicitor's office). He became enamoured, *pour le bon motif*, of course, of a very beautiful lady who was an actress in the intervals of horse-racing, two pursuits in which she was equally unsuccessful. She had, however, numberless friends and admirers, and the failure of a play to succeed, or a horse to win a stake, troubled her little. Her ideas were almost as magnificent as those of her new admirer. Her character had one redeeming feature, that of an absorbing passion for her son, on whom she lavished her affection, and for whom she would have done anything if it would benefit her child. Our friend, who was very wealthy, once offered to run a theatre for this lady—an expensive operation, as is well known—but madam declined. “If,” said she, “you really want to do me a good turn, something that would be of the greatest benefit to me, you can, as you are a rich man, and it would not hurt you. There is only one creature on this earth whose welfare troubles me, and that is not myself, but my son. To make him happy I would do anything, and it is the desire of my life to see his future assured.”

He inquired what was the amount she wanted, and although the sum named, £50,000, would have staggered most men, even a millionaire, he was so much in love that he promptly consented. The lady would not take a cheque; she had heard of his doings with cheques as gifts before, and she had no intention of letting the world know she had been the recipient of his generosity. The gift had to be made in cash, and in due course the £50,000 was handed over in bank notes. Then came the crash: the lady went off to Newmarket, or racing somewhere, with another

man friend, one whom report said she favoured very much, and the millionaire was furious. So mad was he that he consulted his solicitors, and in a fit of drunkenness declared that he had been robbed of the notes. An application to a police magistrate for a warrant was about to be made, when one of his henchmen suggested that if he saw the lady he might get the notes returned. A. was agreeable, and promised the go-between a substantial sum if he recovered the money. Off went the gentleman, whom we will call X., and being gifted with a specious tongue, succeeded in bringing the lady, and the notes, to his employer's house. She entered the room, and with great dignity handed over the envelope containing the notes, asking A. to count them. He having satisfied himself that they were all there, she turned to his agent and said, "Now, Mr X., I don't think there is any further need for your remaining, as I wish to have a few minutes' private conversation with our friend." X. left the room, and not long after so did the lady, and I need hardly say, that she carried away with her the £50,000 in notes.

While I think of it, here is another  
**The Retort** little yarn about the same charming  
**Courteous.** lady, which may as well be told here, although it is nothing about a cheque, only a retort courteous. She was once staying at an hotel at Monte Carlo, and in the hall met a well-known demi-mondaine, somewhat younger than herself, who was wearing a costume identical with her own. A friend with her drew attention to the similarity, and she

remarked, loud enough for the cocotte, whom we will call Mabel, to hear, "Yes, that's the worst of the Maison P., they make for all sorts of people." Later, in the gambling rooms of the Casino, Mabel managed to get a friend to remark on her rival's frock, and was heard to say, "Unfortunately, that is the failing of the Maison P., they make for old and young alike."

**Two Ways  
Out of a  
Difficulty.**

One of the coolest gentlemen I ever met was the late Phil Crosstree. Always hard up and having no profession, he nevertheless ruffled his feathers with the greatest gamecocks in the Kingdom. One morning he was strolling down Jermyn Street, when he felt a hand fall heavily on his back, and, turning round, he was confronted with one of his numerous, and always unpaid, tailors, who exclaimed, "Look here, Mr Crosstree, I want to know when you're going to settle my account? It's a matter of seventy odd pounds, and I can't afford to wait any longer."

"Good heavens, man," said the imperturbable Phil, "don't disgrace me in the street, especially at a time when my poor old grandfather, whose heir I am, is dying. Come in here and have a drink. Then we can talk over matters quietly."

Mr Snip agreed, and presently the pair were seated at a table in the Piccadilly bar, discussing a bottle of "Extra Dry," during the consumption of which Phil explained that his ancestor could not live more than a few hours at the most, and that directly he had gone to heaven, he, Phil, would square up with all his creditors.

"In proof of which," he added, "we'll have another flagon of this excellent wine."

When the bottle was nearly empty, Mr Crosstree accidentally knocked his glass over, and the fizz promptly foamed over his hands.

"There's waste of good liquor," he exclaimed, "though some people say it's lucky. Just wait a minute, Mr Snip, while I have a wash," and he disappeared through the door leading to the Regent Street exit.

Mr Snip waited not a minute, but over half-an-hour. Perhaps he would have waited longer if the waiter had not reminded him that there were two bottles of champagne to be paid for.

Phil avoided Jermyn Street for many a long day after this episode, and Mr Snip always avoided "Jimmy's" when bent on business.

## CHAPTER XVII

### A Joint-Stock Ball.

TWO young fellows of high station and considerable wealth, whose family estates "marched," as the Scotch say, together, entered into the holy bonds of matrimony with two ladies, who were very well known in the land of Bohemia. The brides, after taking possession of their country abodes, began to feel rather dull, the more so as their tastes did not run in the groove of rural pursuits, and the country magnates ignored their existence. Accordingly, they laid their heads together as to the best way in which they could amuse themselves, and agreed, after much discussion, that a fancy dress ball would afford them considerable occupation, especially if the visitors were imported from none too particular circles of the metropolis. But then the question arose as to which mansion should be utilised for the purpose, each lady claiming her right to play the part of hostess. In this dilemma they referred the matter to a certain colonel of their acquaintance, who was supposed to be an authority in such matters. This gallant officer hit upon a brilliant idea, as apt, indeed, as the judgment of Solomon. It was to this effect, that two balls should be given on the same evening in the joint names of both

ladies at their respective residences, and that the guests, like music hall artists, should throughout the night keep on doing "turns" at the rival establishments. Accordingly, the cards of invitation were sent forth much in the following way, handsomely printed in gold lettering on a cream ground.

THE COUNTESS OF TIBBLETHORPE	LADY BADGERDEN
requests the pleasure of	requests the pleasure of
's	's
Company on Saturday, January 12th,	Company on Saturday,
at 10 P.M.	January 12th, at 10 P.M.
Dancing—Tibblethorpe Park	Dancing—Brockdene
R.S.V.P. Barkington	R.S.V.P. Barkington
Good for both shows.	

The ladies were enchanted with the ingenious device of the Colonel, and so was he, for he obtained *carte blanche* as to ordering the suppers and wines at both seats of the great. The two husbands told their spouses not to bother them with their "foolery." They were now as hard men as they had been soft before their nuptials. They mutually agreed to keep out of the way on January 12th. The ladies not only asked large house parties, but engaged all the available hostelries, several vicarages (the owners whereof were only too glad to be away on such an occasion), and some private dwellings. All seemed to be progressing most favourably. The Colonel worked like a navvy, four bands were engaged, and six late special trains to bring down those ladies and gentlemen who could not well shirk their London engagements, and the run on conveyances was unprecedented in the horse jobbing history of the

county. But alas! on the Thursday before the joint-stock festivities, her ladyship of Tibblethorpe fell out with her ladyship of Badgerden as to which of them should have *first* call on the services of the Colonel on the night of the balls. That officer, on being appealed to, stated that not being Sir Boyle Roche's bird, he could not be in two places at one and the same time, but offered to travel to and fro during the entire proceedings. The ladies had not the faintest idea what he meant by Sir Boyle Roche's bird, but after a great deal of wrangling they agreed to toss up for his services. Lady Badgerden stuck to "man" and won. Lady Tibblethorpe smiled, but resolved on revenge. Next day, that is on Friday, she telegraphed to every guest who had accepted the invitation.

"Lady Badgerden too ill with scarlet fever to receive to-morrow night—only my show going—Maud Tibblethorpe." "There," she exclaimed triumphantly, "I think that will cook her goose."

Perhaps she would have performed that social culinary operation, but unluckily she could not keep her mouth shut. Very unwisely she communicated her prospective triumph to the Colonel under an oath of secrecy. On consideration he felt that in all justice he could not keep it to himself, so after stipulating for a consideration, he communicated the purport of Lady Tibblethorpe's treacherous message to her supposed ally. The Lady of Brockdene was at first inclined to speed to Tibblethorpe Park, and then and there assault the traitress. But better counsels prevailed. At first she wished to wire a contradiction of her malady, but the Colonel pointed out that few would believe her. Finally she de-

spatched the subjoined telegram to all the invites ;  
“Poor Lady Tibblethorpe just seized with small-pox. Too weak to write. Both dances off.—SELINA BADGERDEN.”

“But what’s to be done with the bands, the suppers, the wines, and the flowers?” she asked. “Send another wire,” replied the astute Colonel, “and have the whole caboodle despatched to Tibblethorpe,” which was done. Lady Tibblethorpe, dressed as the Queen of Sheba, and attended by half-a-dozen stray guests, spent a night of sorrow, while Lady Badgerden was on her way to Monte Carlo. There were tears, wailing, and gnashing of teeth, to say nothing of threatened actions at law which never came off. But the Colonel has always declared that he expected “the thing to come off all right.” So it did very much so with regard to himself.

**An Unexpected Guest.** Everybody knows the Up-River Hotel, at all events everybody who likes a good dinner, and a lounge on the prettiest lawn in summer-time on the Thames. I regret to say, however, that occasionally some of the guests at the Up-River do not conduct themselves with that perfect propriety which it is the desire of the manager to enforce. One of these miscreants was Lieutenant the Hon. Adolphus Rattler of the Goldstream Carabineers. He was a good-looking young fellow, with plenty of money and a strong belief in his irresistible manners with the weaker but nobler sex. A stranger hearing “Dolly” talk would imagine that he had made more conquests in the land of fair women than ever did Napoleon I. on the Continent of Europe. One day,



at the end of July, Mr Rattler turned up at the Up-River, and as usual began to look about the premises for some dame or damsel whom he might subjugate. After having been warned off the course by several suspicious cavaliers, he finally, for he was not proud, fixed his eye on a very pretty lady's maid, who was indeed the body servant of no less a personage than the Countess of Taplow, whose appearance as a Lifeguardsman created such a sensation at the Duchess of Medenham's fancy dress ball. The *femme de chambre*, whose name was Janet Jenkins, was by no means disinclined for a flirtation with the dashing carabineer, but being engaged to be married to the valet of the Bishop of Wolverhampton at Christmas, she took particularly good care that the line should be drawn somewhere. But she had not, while encouraging the Hon. Dolly's attentions, reckoned upon that gallant officer's resolution to capture feminine fortresses by storm if all other methods failed. I should mention that, owing to the hotel being very full, Janet was given as a sleeping chamber an outlying corrugated iron edifice, originally erected for a photographic studio, and known among the servants as the Tin Tabernacle. This fact had not escaped the notice of the gay lieutenant; but Janet was fairly frightened when he abruptly told her one morning when they were dallying in the shrubbery that he meant to invade the Tin Tabernacle that very evening, armed with a bottle of champagne and a *paté de foie gras*, "when," he added caressingly, "we can have a jolly little supper together, and no one, not even old Mother Boots" (in this fashion he referred to the Right Honourable Countess) "will be a bit the wiser."

Poor Janet, loyal to her episcopal *fiancé*, protested that such a tryst was impossible, but the carabineer laughed her objections to scorn. "When I say a thing I mean it," he said emphatically, "and look here, sweetheart, I've actually got the key of your tin nest," and the villain flourished before her dismayed eyes the metal guardian of Janet's security. As he did so, the sound of approaching footsteps made the lady's maid run like a hare, while the Hon. Dolly strolled leisurely to meet Lord and Lady Taplow.

"Hallo, Dolly," said Mother Boots, "are you bird-nesting?"

"Thinking about it," replied Dolly.

"Take care," simpered her ladyship, "eggs get addled sometimes."

She was a frivolous flirt of not more than three-and-forty.

"That all depends on how the hen hatches them," retorted Dolly, who knew that the Countess had never succeeded in bringing any living specimens of maternity into the world.

Meantime Janet Jenkins had in despair confided her trouble to Miss Spenton, the manageress, a lady whose experience of mankind was as vast as the Atlantic Ocean.

"Of course, Janet," she said, "it would never do for me to lose the custom of Lord and Lady Taplow, which I certainly should if that Turk of a Rattler carries out his threat, for the whole thing is sure to come out, and I shouldn't like that God-fearing lover of yours, Mr Speckles, to have any doubts about your faithfulness. Not but what you're very frivolous, my dear. You should never let the counter-

pane know who's sleeping between the sheets. I never have. However, I'll pull you through, never fear. You'll share my bed to-night. I shan't be sorry to get rid of Mr Rattler, moreover; he's rich, but too noisy for us. I don't mind a dog that bites, but I can't stand a dog that barks. By the way, do you know our boy, Jobber, by sight, a dirty rascal who cleans the knives and cleans out the lavatories? Well, he shall sleep in the tabernacle and take on your supper, but mum's the word."

That same night at the witching hour, the Honourable Dolly, after the fashion of a modern Tarquin, crept to the portal of the Tin Tabernacle, bearing with him in a basket a magnum of the best and a Strasburg pie. No light was visible as the Lothario softly entered the room, but a sound of snoring proceeded from the bed.

"Janet! Janet!" said the intruder in a low voice, "wake up, my darling, I've brought the supper." Still no answer.

"How soundly she sleeps," muttered the carabineer, as he struck a wax match and approached the couch, and touched the recumbent figure concealed by the bedclothes.

Up sprang a filthy-faced youth, in a flannel shirt and corduroy trousers to match.

"What the h—l do you want?" he shouted.

The Honourable Dolly flung the basket at his head and rushed forth into the night. The next morning he had disappeared, and started immediately afterwards on leave for big game shooting in British Columbia. On the same morning, Jobber was discovered hopelessly drunk, with his face smeared with *paté de foie gras*, and Janet Jenkins wrote to her Mr Speckles to

tell him that her dear friend, Miss Spenlow, advised her to put off their marriage for a year or two, "till she knew the ways of the world."

**The White Owl.** A young fellow, whom I will call Tosker, was one of the most in-

veterate practical jokers I ever came across. Coming back from Australia some years ago, on one of the Orient boats, he soon set himself to devise some means of making mischief. He quickly discovered among the passengers a gentleman who, while professing to be the sepulchre of secrets, was nevertheless the leakiest vessel on board. Tosker accosted William Tell one morning and drew him aside.

"A curious thing happened to me early this morning—a very curious thing," he began, and stopped.

William Tell was all ears. "What was it?" he asked eagerly.

"I hardly like to say," said Tosker, "but can I trust you?"

"I take my dying oath I won't breathe a word," swore the Sepulchre of Secrets.

"Well," said Tosker, "I couldn't sleep last night and went on deck about one o'clock. Scarcely had I done so, when as I was standing by the stern funnel, something crashed up against it and fell fluttering at my feet. I picked it up."

"Good heavens! what was it?" cried William Tell excitedly.

"It was a white owl," replied Tosker calmly. "A most rare bird. It must have come from Queensland."

"What did you do with it?" asked William.

"That is the point," answered the owl captor. "The bird was not in the least bit hurt, so I took it to my cabin, tied a string round its leg, and put it under my berth, which is, as you know, the lower one. I am very anxious to get the owl safely to England, where I shall present it to the Zoo. But if the matter gets wind, of course the captain will compel me to hand it over to the care of the butcher, who will probably neglect and starve the poor creature. Now you must help me feed it to-night. Remember I rely upon your secrecy."

"You have my word," replied William Tell solemnly, his bosom bursting with the information just received. He, as Tosker anticipated, rushed off to the ladies' saloon, where, quite regardless of his promise, he revealed the fact of the wondrous capture to a number of fair listeners, who all agreed with William Tell that the owl must be inspected at the very earliest opportunity.

"This very day," said the faithless Sepulchre, "Tosker always plays cards between four and five, and then we'll creep down to his cabin and look at the bird."

In order to make sure, he carelessly asked Tosker if he meant going in for poker that afternoon.

"Why, certainly, I owe the boys their revenge," replied Tosker, feeling sure that the plan was laid.

Nevertheless he did not play cards, but esconced himself, with two or three chosen friends, in the cabin immediately opposite his own, and this is what they saw.

Headed by the traitor, William Tell, a party of dames and damsels on tiptoe assembled in the

passage, when their leader, having ascertained that Tosker was absent, boldly opened the door.

"The owl's there," he said eagerly, "look at the string tied to the leg of the cot. I'll fetch it out."

"Be very careful, Mr Tell. Mind the owl doesn't bite you. I believe I can hear it squeaking. I wonder if it's a big one," and similar exclamations were raised by the fair ones as the valiant William clutched the string and gave a violent pull. In a trice the white owl was revealed. It was a handled breakfast cup of the largest size. Tosker and his comrades burst into a vulgar roar of laughter as the party of inspection fled shrieking from the spot. But "The White Owl" was a standing toast on that liner till she finished her voyage at Tilbury Docks.

## CHAPTER XVIII

An "Editor's" even the "Shifter" had discovered  
Reward. himself, and minor literary mushrooms

were still spawn on their congenital pastures and Uplands, there was attached to the staff of the *Pink 'Un* a little gentleman who liked to call himself "Kibble." His nature was quite different to that of his colleagues. Whereas they preferred to draw their princely salaries by doing as little work as possible, "Kibble" was indefatigable in exerting himself from morning till night, and while Master and his subordinates were racing, shooting, fishing, or patronising the variety theatres, "Kibble" sat tight to his desk reading the official correspondence, consulting Ruff's Guide, bagging quips and cranks from trans-Atlantic papers, and generally making himself very useful. It was his boast, only made by the poor little chap after six or seven goes of whisky hot at the "Cheshire Cheese," or the "Rainbow," that he, "Kibble," was the real editor of the *Pink 'Un*. Nobody disputed his claim to the title—indeed, so long as he stuck to his self-imposed toil, and relieved the burdens of others, he might have fearlessly declared himself to be the Sole Proprietor of 52 Fleet Street and Bottom Barley Court.

Now it chanced about this period that the great Henry Brougham Farnie, the henchman of the late Alexander Henderson, and the partner of Charles Wyndham in various enterprises, discovered in the company engaged at the Comedy Theatre, a fair damsel who showed such marked ability in the delivering the two lines allotted to her by the said Farnie, that he resolved to send her for three months to a Dramatic School at Paris, there to acquire some knowledge of the art of acting. At the end of her short exile, Miss Cotherstone (a name as assumed as that under which she frisked behind the foot-lights) returned from the Metropolis of Gaul with a very strong French accent, to the inexpressible admiration and envy of her lady friends, who perceived that a foreign sauce served up with the Queen's English was vastly attractive to many wealthy patrons of the drama. The wondrous linguistic change was bruited far and wide, and Farnie was thinking of writing a new and revised edition of *Içi On Parle Français*, with Miss Cotherstone as Mademoiselle Victorine Dubois, when a naughty scribe upset the harmony of the playhouse by a paragraph which appeared in the *Pink 'Un* to the following effect :—"Mr H. B. Farnie, well known as the father of the flocks confided to his guidance, some few months ago discovered amazing histrionic promise in a young lady intrusted to his paternal care, and sacrificing the present interests of the theatre on the altar of prospective fame, sent the maiden in question to be dramatically trained in Paris. Alas! what is the reward of Mr Farnie's disinterested virtue? The young lady has returned to her native land perfectly educated in the art of



the Stage, but having forgotten how to speak her mother tongue. Consequently she cannot undertake any of those great rôles which her generous benefactor had prepared for her." These were not the exact words, but the gist of them was the same.

On the Monday following the appearance of the above paragraph, only two persons were present on the palatial premises, the one, Mr "Kibble," in the Editorial Chair, engaged in separating suspicious-looking letters marked "Personal" and "Very Important" from less pressing missives; the other, the office boy, who was counting the returned copies of *The Bird of Freedom* on the distribution counter. Presently, while Mr "Kibble" was debating whether or not to mark a blue envelope "Gone abroad, left no address," the office boy entered, and observed abruptly, "Lady to see the Heditor."

"A lady!" exclaimed Mr "Kibble," "what sort of a lady, Alfred?"

"Fust class, I should sai," replied the lad; "drew up in a private 'ansom, and wery tall, golding 'air, 'as a sealskin jacket down to 'er 'eels. Didn't give no name."

"Deary me," said Mr "Kibble," "that sounds interesting. Show her in, Alfred, show her in, and ask her to mind the hole in the floor by the door."

The boy ushered the fair Unknown into the apartment. The beauteous stranger had golden locks, flashing blue eyes, and a splendid otter-skin cloak met the tips of her tiny varnished boots. She was also remarkably tall, even when allowance was made for her heels. In fact, she was about one and a half greater in stature than Mr "Kibble," who, ap-

proaching the lady, the while washing his hands with invisible soap, inquired in what way he could be of service to her.

"I wish," she said, in a rich soprano voice, which thrilled "Kibble's" marrow, "to see the editor of the *Sporting Times*."

"Madam," replied "Kibble," bending his head down to his very knees, "I am that unworthy individual."

"What," exclaimed the fair Unknown, "are you the editor?"

"I have that privilege, madam," returned "Kibble," with another bow, thinking to himself that all the sugar-plums of this world were not put before the indolent and unworthy labourers in Master's vineyard.

"You say that you are the editor," said the lady, taking off her gloves.

"I do," repeated "Kibble," with a third bow, even lower than the other two.

"Then take that, and that, and that," cried the fair Unknown, beginning to play rapjacket with the unfortunate "Kibble" all round the office. "I'll teach you to put blackguard articles in your filthy rag about me and Mr Farnie." And she continued her chastisement the while the wretched "Kibble" could only gasp, "Have mercy, have mercy, madam, have mercy." He knew it would be no use shouting for help, for no one but the office boy would hear him, and he was unwilling that his humiliation should be witnessed by a menial. Nevertheless, it was that misguided youth who, with a piece of blotting paper stuffed into his mouth to bottle his laughter, witnessed

the whole affray through the keyhole, and, subsequently, reported the proceedings.

After five minutes' cut and thrust, Miss Cotherstone, for it was she, became exhausted, and throwing the limp, battered, bruised, bleeding, and torn "Kibble" into the fireplace, she dashed from the room, exclaiming, "Next week write an account in your gutter sheet of how Topsy Cotherstone knocked the stuffing out of the editor."

But Mr "Kibble" never claimed that purely honorary title again. When master heard of the scrimmage, he immediately booked a seat at the Comedy, in order to see if he personally could try conclusions with the fair Amazon, and having mistaken Miss Florence St John for "Kibble's" assailant, declared, in print, that Miss Cotherstone was second only to Patti.

Mr Courtice Pounds is, or was, an inveterate practical joker. In this he used to be aided and abetted by a fellow-actor who was playing with him at the same theatre, but sometimes these two friends practised their jokes on one another.

One night, going home on the Underground with his friend, the other actor dozed off, and Pounds, without awakening him when he got out at his station, whispered to the only other occupant of the compartment—a big, burly man,—“Excuse me, sir, troubling you, but my friend is a trifle queer,”—touching his forehead—“he has to get out at South Kensington, where he lives, but sometimes he will insist upon going further on. Would you mind seeing that he does alight at his proper station?”

The stranger willingly agreed, and the train went on, leaving Pounds on the platform.

Next day, Pounds' friend was very angry at the joke played upon him. He was really bound for Ealing, many stations further on, but on arriving at South Kensington, the tall stranger, addressing him, said:—

“Now, my lad, here's South Kensington, you must get out.”

“Oh, no,” said the actor, “I am going on to Ealing.”

“Na, na, my lad, you must get out here,” and to make a long story short, the actor was bundled out, neck and crop, and had to take a cab home to Ealing, which cost him half-a-crown.

**Pounds' Poodle.** Pounds was once desirous of purchasing a poodle, and came to me when the Pelican Club was open, of which he was a member, knowing that I had some slight acquaintance with dog fanciers, and asked me to procure him one, cheap. I inquired how much he wanted to pay, and as his ideas in that respect were extremely moderate, I consulted a gentleman who obtains dogs for his acquaintances, not always by legitimate means. This worthy said he had his eye upon a black poodle which he thought would just suit my friend, and he thought he would be able to get it in a couple of days. True to his word, he arrived at the Club with a very handsome black poodle, which he handed over to me in exchange for the sovereigns, and recommended me to keep the animal quiet for a day or two, to accustom him to his new home.

I followed his advice, and in two or three days

informed Pounds that his new purchase was at the Club. He arrived, and was so pleased with the animal that he took it off to the theatre where he was acting, and summoned some of his friends in the company to his dressing-room to see his new dog. Among these was a charming actress, who, on seeing the poodle, exclaimed, "Why, it's my dear Fifi. 'Fifi, Fifi,'" upon which the dog ran to her with every expression of delight.

I need hardly say that the dog provider had stolen the actress' poodle, and sold it to me.

**Another Poodle Story.** This poodle story reminds me of another. A most charming lady of my acquaintance owns a handsome black poodle who is as clever as these dogs can be, and is particularly a great favourite wherever he goes, inasmuch as he never barks. One day his owner was paying a call accompanied as usual by her pet, who was made much of by the hostess, who enquired his name.

"Ponum," replied his fair owner.

"Ponum; what a funny name. What does it mean?"

"It is Hebrew, you know, for face."

"You dear dog," said the châtelaine, presently fondling the poodle, "I sha'n't call you Ponum. I'll call you by your Christian name,—Face."

Then fell a silence that reached to the nearest synagogue.

**A Comedian's Appetite.** The music-hall singer, whom I have called Billy, was very great at getting up theatrical cricket-matches, in which he sometimes took part himself, and more especially

did justice to the luncheon, as he was blessed with an enormous appetite.

On one occasion he had organised one of these functions, which took place at Tufnell Park grounds. When the respective elevens arrived, the proprietor met them at the gate and welcomed them. His face of horror, however, when he saw Billy, was comical; and just before the bell rang later on for luncheon, he took Billy on one side and said:—

“Do you mind doing me a favour?”

“Certainly,” said Billy.

“Then, old man, take this dollar and go and get your lunch elsewhere.

**A Compliment from “Swish.”** Some people are not very happy in their method of paying compliments, and seem to forget that even with actors comparisons are odious. “Swish” was once at a theatrical dance, and did not get along very well with his partner, who may have been an excellent stage dancer, but was not particularly good at ball-room waltzing. As they neared the refreshment buffet, with the lady on his arm, he remarked to her, “If you can’t act better than you dance, you must get a very poor living.”

**A Little Mistake.** Actors frequently fail to distinguish between genuine and false applause. I was standing next to the manager of a music-hall on the night of the first appearance of a comedian. He was a dreadfully dull dog, and a decided failure, but the manager, anxious to let him down lightly, turned to us and said, “Make a noise, boys, give him a hand,” and we all applauded most

vigorously. Later on, at the bar, when the comedian was refreshing himself after his labours, he remarked to the manager *à propos* to his success with the audience :—

“I do go, gov’nor, don’t I?”

“Yes,” replied the manager, “you do, on Saturday.”

**The Identity of Irving.** Sir Henry Irving is, I believe, extremely fond of strolling about the outlying suburbs of London, and particularly frequents Hampstead Heath. One afternoon during a walk he passed two labourers who were repairing the road, and overheard them say, one to the other :—

“Who’s that, Bill, I seem to know his chivvy?”

“Yes,” said the other, “why, it’s Shakespeare, of course.”

**Henry Pettitt’s Candour.** The late Henry Pettitt was always very frank as to the merits of his plays; indeed, I doubt if I ever came across a dramatic author with less conceit as to the value of his work. At Brighton one Sunday morning, after the production of a new piece of his, a friend met him, and congratulated him on his success of the night before, and wound up by saying, “Lucky beggar, same old story, I suppose?”

“Yes,” replied Pettitt, “but what a good one it is.”

**Fred Leslie on Colonials.** It seems to me that some of the best stories have been fathered upon actors who are no longer alive. Poor Fred Leslie, when he was touring in Australia, said rather

a good thing which, however, offended the Colonial he told it to. This gentleman was standing talking to him as they sailed into Sydney harbour, and rather bored Fred with his encomiums on the beautiful country, beautiful women, etc., he would find in Australia. When he had finished his catalogue of the virtues of the Australians, winding up with extolling the strength and comeliness of the men, Leslie remarked: "So you ought to be, you were sent here by some of the best judges in the old country."

**Medical Certificates.** Medical certificates are, as everyone knows, of great service to ladies in the dramatic profession. Sometimes they are very much abused, as Mr Lederer, of the *Belle of New York* Company, found out when he arrived in this country. Having occasion to address the assembled company of the Shaftesbury Theatre, he said he was grieved to find that they were all suffering from a new complaint, which necessitated their absence from Saturday till Monday, fortified by a doctor's certificate.

Sometimes "actresses" are not very particular as to the illness they may be suffering from, so long as they can get the required holiday. One young lady at a large theatre, who had a thinking part, and really was only required to show off the pretty dresses she wore on the stage, sent a doctor's certificate to the manager, which stated that she had an attack of tonsillitis. It would have been far more to the point if her medical attendant had stated that she was suffering from corns or a sprained ankle.



## CHAPTER XIX

**Augustus  
Harris' Way of  
Conducting  
Business.**

IT is well known that the late Sir Augustus Harris used to transact his business *coram populo*, frequently making important engagements while a number of people were standing around. In fact, he hardly knew what it was to occupy a private room—at least in business matters. Years ago he was conducting a rehearsal, at Drury Lane Theatre, of a new autumn drama, and while doing so he noticed a stranger standing at the back of the stage. Suspending the rehearsal for a moment, he shouted to the man, who is now a well-known and prominent actor :—

“Hi, what do you want, sir?”

“An engagement,” the actor shouted back to the manager.

“How much a week?” said Harris.

“Ten pounds,” responded the stranger.

“Give you two,” said the manager.

“Done,” said the actor.

Wild horses shall not drag from me the name of this, as I said, now prominent actor.

**Terriss' Luck.**

Poor Bill Terriss was very fond of a game of cards, poker being his especial fancy, at which, as a rule, he had very bad luck. His

favourite club was the Green Room, where of an afternoon, before going to work, he would frequently join the card-table. One afternoon, playing poker, his luck was worse than usual—in fact, it was so bad that the other players had been sympathising with him. At last he got a wonderful hand, and at that moment, old Blakely, who had not very much idea of the game, if any, looked over his cards and blurted out, “Oh, Billy, what a beautiful hand you have, dear boy, four aces,” at which poor Terriss threw down his cards and began to curse.

**Semi-detached  
Couples.**

People who indulge in what is generally known as the main line and loop line attachments, should be very careful in the distribution of their visiting-cards. A well-known dramatist, now no more, who kept up two establishments when he was alive, was travelling abroad with Mrs X., No. 2. While there, he met some very pleasant people who were very anxious to improve the acquaintance when they returned to London. The dramatist was also desirous of knowing them better, and pulling out his card-case, gave them, as he supposed, the address of the better-half who was abroad with him. Unfortunately, the card he gave them bore the address of Mrs X., No. 1, upon it, and when his nice new friends called at his house in London, they were astonished to be confronted by a strange lady.

**All Actors alike  
to him.**

Some persons have no reverence for the drama. A prominent actor was, with a friend, walking past the Garrick Theatre at the time Little Tich was playing there in

*Lord Tom Noddy.* As they arrived outside the playhouse, the actor struck an attitude, and remarked to his companion:—"What a disgraceful thing it is that a performer of that class should be occupying the boards once graced by John Hare."

"Really," said his friend, "now it never struck me that way. To tell you the truth, I have to count John Hare's fingers before I can tell the difference between him and Little Tich."

**Stage Realism.** Realism on the stage is advancing greatly. An actor who took a small part in *A Runaway Girl* at the Gaiety, had to appear as an old man extremely fond of angling. As a matter of fact, the actor himself was extremely addicted to fishing, so that when the manager told him to supply himself with a new rod as a property, he carefully went and ordered a most magnificent article, which cost the management several pounds. The same manager at another of his theatres, when producing a musical piece dealing with the humours of Ancient Rome, is reported to have remarked to a scene painter, "You must hurry up those sketches for the scenery, as I have to send to Ancient Rome for the costumes."

**An Unripe Plum.** Actors have not always been the well-dressed men they usually now are on the stage. A low comedian was very anxious to provide himself with a plum-coloured velvet coat, and instead of, as is the fashion of modern times, going to a West-End tailor, he hied himself to a second-hand dealer in Petticoat Lane. Here he apparently found the very thing he wanted,

purchased it, and took it home. To his surprise, the next morning in the daylight he found that the colour of the coat was green instead of purple, and in a great rage he went back to his friend, the old-clothes man. Instead of apologising, the Jew vendor was extremely rude, and advised him to wear it until it was ripe.

Only his  
Mother.

In the days when the Gaiety Theatre was much more of an evening resort for the *jeunesse dorée* than it is now—when, in fact, it was as much a club as is the Empire promenade of the present day—a well-known *habitué* of the theatre once took his mother to the stalls. So well known was he to the ladies with thinking parts, that they could not help taking notice of his presence by making very obvious grimaces at him. His mamma remarked these manifestations from the fair chorus ladies, and drew her son's attention to the interest he was evidently exciting amongst them, and asked him what it meant. His reply was that he supposed they were wondering who the old tart was he had with him.

Music hath  
Charms.

One of our best known dabblers in theatrical speculation certainly strummed his way into success on the banjo and piano. Nowadays he is one of the most sought-after young men in certain society, and at times he is rather inclined to boast of his many invitations. Once when holding forth in this manner to a small crowd at Romano's, and lamenting that he had not a night to spare for many weeks to come, one of his companions remarked, "It's lucky your ma

taught you the piano, it has got you many a dinner."

Talking of nights to spare, one of the most charming of actresses made rather a neat answer once to a very elaborate compliment. To her said a witty author, "You are a lucky woman, Mrs Z., but I think the Almighty might have been even more good to you and given you two nights to every day of your life."

"Perhaps He might," replied the beauty, "but even if He had I shouldn't have had an evening to call my own."

At the time when a well-known  
**An Interested** theatrical breach of promise action  
**Party to the** was being tried, a friend of mine  
**Action.** happened to go to the stage door of  
a West-End theatre. The charwoman who was  
engaged cleaning the steps stopped, and as she  
moved aside to let him pass, she remarked, "Excuse  
me, sir, have you heard how Baby Boston's action  
has gone to-day?"

"No," he replied, "I don't think it's over yet, but why do you take so much interest in it?"

"Well, sir," she said, "I ought to, Baby's my niece."

Prominent artists are not always  
**Corney Grain.** honoured out of their own country.  
The late Corney Grain was once asked down to a  
party at Burton-on-Trent. During the evening he  
gave his admirable performance. Later on, after  
supper, a rather haw! haw! young man got into  
conversation with him, and as a delicate piece of

humour, while complimenting him on his entertainment, said, "You are the village wit, I presume?"

This piece of impertinence metaphorically struck Dick Grain all of a heap.

Grain was, as a matter of fact, extremely sensitive of criticism, especially the criticism of amateurs at private parties. Early one evening, before the majority of the guests had arrived, at a function where I met Grain, he was challenged by an acquaintance who ought to have known better, and who remarked to him, "This is devilish dull, Dick, cheer us up with a tune, old man." In response, Grain turned on his heel and left the house, although by so doing he missed a capital supper, of which meal he was extremely fond.

Wanted, a  
Tenor.                      A friend of mine connected with the theatrical profession came to me one day, and said:

"'Swears,' I am getting on ripping with that new piece of mine. Let me show you my cast. What do you think of it? Isn't it grand?"

"Very good indeed," said I.

"One thing," he added, "I must have between this and Monday—a tenor."

I said, "On my word, s'elp me, £2 is all the money I have in the world."

"You stupid ass," said he, "a tenor vocalist is my requirement."

Distinction with  
a Difference.              A celebrated actress, well known in England, was in America at a big dinner. "I beg pardon," said the host, who sat next to her, "but how magnificent that diamond necklace of yours is."

"Yes," she said, "I prize that very highly, very highly indeed. Do you know, it was given to me by the women of England, as the most moral woman on the English stage?"

A gentleman sitting by remarked to the lady by *his* side:

"Pardon me, but following the example of our host, I should like to say that that is a most beautiful collar round your neck."

"Do you know," she replied, "I prize it very highly, very, very highly indeed. It was given me for being the most, the most—er—charming actress on the English stage."

**Dan Leno.** Some time before Dan Leno was a famous comedian, he was a Lancashire clog-dancer of considerable repute. He was quite a star of the Provincial music halls, where his salary was probably the magnificent sum of about £6 a week. At one of these little halls in the country he arrived one day for a band rehearsal, and handed some new band parts to the conductor. The latter looked at them, and said in broad Lancashire that it seemed a very fine piece of music, and he thought that he and the band had better adjourn to the nearest pub to look it well over. This looking-over process seemed to have taken the best part of the afternoon, for Leno saw no more of the musicians. That night his new clog-dance should have followed his first song, but at the end of the ditty the conductor stood up and said to Leno in an audible voice, which must have been heard by the majority of the audience, "We'll take your dance without the music, Mr Leno, as they will hear the 'taps' better."

In explanation of this, it may be noted that the judges of a clog-dancing competition in Lancashire frequently sit beneath the stage while the dancing is going on, and register the number and precision of the taps of the clogs.

**Substituted  
Service.**

One of the best known of the musical directors in London is such a generous fellow, that although he earns a large salary, he rarely has a penny in his pocket, and is usually very much in debt. It is a custom at the theatre where he conducts that if one of his bandsmen wishes to provide a deputy, he hands up to the musical director a slip of paper with the name and address of his substitute on it, and the date of the evening on which he proposes to absent himself. One of these bandsmen deputising for the regular man happened to be an agent or dealer in cycles, and in due course the careless conductor had purchased one of the machines on credit. Time passed, and, of course, the cycle was never paid for, and one evening the old deputy turned up again. The conductor was pleased at this, thinking he would be able to get a prolongation of his credit. Next night the same deputy arrived, and handed up to the conductor what appeared to be a slip of paper excusing himself from coming again, but which in reality was a County Court summons for the value of the machine, with which the careful cyclist personally served the conductor.

The realism of the stage, such as we see at Drury Lane, cannot compare with the make-up of a well-known comedian, which was so good that he took



in one of the directors of the Company that owned the theatre. The director, poor fellow, is dead, he having been drowned on the *Stella*, but when he was alive many of his co-directors used to laugh at his first experience on the stage at the Empire Theatre. Mr Charles Coborn was singing there some few years ago a song about newspapers, and was made up as a newsboy. As he came from his dressing-room one evening, he said to the stage manager chaffingly, "'Ave a paper, guv'nor?" holding up a bunch of the evening papers. The director, who was standing by, said to Mr Charles Wilson, the stage manager, "I wonder you allow these boys in the theatre. I think you had better tell him to go out." Wilson, scenting a joke, said, "Hadn't you better order him out of the theatre yourself, sir, as you are the only director on the stage?" The fussy director took him at his word, and in a few minutes Mr Coborn found himself outside the stage door, with the assistance of a couple of the stage hands. There was, of course, a stage wait for a minute or two, while they got the comedian on the stage by another entrance. Meanwhile the director had gone to the front of the house and there discovered his mistake. At the next Board meeting, as may be imagined, he was thoroughly roasted by his colleagues, as the story had, of course, got all over the theatre.

Charles  
Coborn's  
Make-up.

At a certain playhouse not a thousand miles from Trafalgar Square there appeared a very talented comedian, whom I will call Mr Goldfinch. He was and is, without doubt,

Caught in her  
own Trap.

one of the most amusing men on and off the stage that I ever met, and what is called "excellent company." If Mr Goldfinch had a failing (now I trust completely cured), it was, at the period to which I refer, a propensity for flirting with the fair sex, and this was the more reprehensible because Mr Goldfinch was married, and what is more to the point, very much married. Mrs Goldfinch was, indeed, not only about three times the size of her butterfly spouse, but besides being very comely she was also particularly strong in physical science, and as far as she could, guarded Mr Goldfinch as though he was a pearl of great price. Now at the theatre to which I refer, Mr Goldfinch's dressing-room was situate in the base of the building next to a large chamber reserved for the use of the ladies of the ballet, and immediately opposite was a third apartment, in which four shapely damsels, who usually appeared as pages or officers, put on their war paint. One of them, Miss Alexandra Darlington, had, just before my yarn begins, been on very friendly terms with Mr Goldfinch, and quite against the rules of the playhouse had many a time and oft sipped the exhilarating brandy and soda or the soothing stout in that gentleman's dressing-room. But all of a sudden the volatile Mr Goldfinch transferred his attentions to one of the ballerinas and the Henessy and Guinness flowed down the gullet of another. This was conduct which no lady with a proper sense of her own dignity could endure, and Miss Darlington resolved to be revenged. Accordingly, she made it her business to seek out Mrs Goldfinch, who often visited the theatre, especially on Friday night when treasury was paid, and informed

that muscular dame that the "carrying on" of Mr Goldfinch with one of the dancers was a notorious scandal, which she, as a true friend, felt bound to bring to the notice of his wronged wife. Mrs Goldfinch gave a grim smile at the information, but was far too cute a lady to accept Miss Darlington's statement as gospel truth, so she said:—

"I'm very much obliged to you for telling me this, but I know my husband so well that I am certain that he would never try to mash any woman, especially a ballet girl. He is quite above such a thing."

"Well, my dear," observed Miss Darlington, feeling very mortified, "I thought it only right to tell you."

"Thank you," said Mrs Goldfinch coldly, "but depend upon it I shan't take the trouble to watch him."

There the matter dropped, and Miss Darlington, finding that her plan had not succeeded, determined on another, namely, to lure back the truant, Goldfinch himself. Envious busybodies asserted that she carried out her purpose more by the despatch of certain pints of the "boy" to Mr Goldfinch's room than by her personal charms, but, after all, this is calumny. As a matter of fact, however, the ballerina was deserted, and the fair Alexandra resumed her sway over the comedian. Meantime Mrs Goldfinch had bided her time, and it was not until nearly a fortnight after Miss Darlington's disclosure that she resolved on action.

Thus it happened that one night she glided down to the basement of the playhouse, and, snugly hidden by the staircase which ended at the door of Mr Goldfinch's robing room, she waited events. She


heard the popping of corks and the ring of merry laughter proceeding from her peccant partner's den, and though she ground her firm white teeth with anger, she bided her time, knowing that the quarry must sooner or later break covert.

"I'll ballet girl her," she muttered, as the door was furtively opened ; a head peered forth, and to her astonishment, whom should she confront but Miss Alexandra Darlington, who stammered :—

"I only went to sew a button on his trousers."

"Button on his trousers!" echoed Mrs Goldfinch scornfully. "How long have you been a dresser? You want a bit of dressing yourself, it strikes me."

Then the fur began to fly, and it flew till the stage manager rushed down to pick up the bits—Miss Darlington took a few days' holiday—Mr Goldfinch was removed to a dressing-room upstairs, where he found consolation in the sympathy of a dashing chorister, who had so little ear for music that she could not tell the difference between "Rule Britannia" and "God save the Queen."



## CHAPTER XX

THIS chapter is mainly about the fair sex, so hopeless misogynists may skip it if they wish, although possibly the divorce division of it may please them. It should have been longer, but my excuse is that there is hardly a chapter of my life which does not deal with women.

A Poacher            "All's fair in love or war," says the old adage, and this is, I am afraid, the motto of Bob Woking, better known as "The Cemetery." One fine day he was in the Club enclosure at Kempton Park, just before racing began, when he encountered his old "pal," Captain Gringo, who greatly fancied himself where the fair sex were in question.

"Hallo, Cemetery," quoth the Captain.

"Hallo, Grinks," responded Woking, "going to have any luck to-day?"

"Rather," replied the warrior, "if the day ends as it's begun."

"What do you mean?" asked "The Cemetery," "racing hasn't started yet."

"Oh!" replied Gringo with a wink, "I wasn't referring to this kind of entertainment, but to the two-legged filly stakes. By Gad! coming down in the train to-day at Willesden, I picked up as pretty

a piece of goods as you'd find in a day's march—a widow she said she was."

"Indeed," observed "The Cemetery," pricking up his ears, "is she here to-day?"

"No," answered Gringo, "she stopped short at Richmond, where she lives. By Gad! my boy, I'm in luck, for she's asked me to dinner to-night. By the way, barring the Star and Garter, I don't know Richmond very well, do you?"

"Every yard of it," replied "The Cemetery"; "was at school there."

"Well, then," said the Captain, producing his notebook, "can you tell me where Onslow Road is?"

"What number?" asked Woking. "You see it's rather a long street, runs from the bottom to the top of the hill."

"Sixty-seven, that's the ticket," replied Gringo.

"Oh, that's about half-way up," said "The Cemetery."

"By Jove, there's the saddling bell," and he disappeared into the Paddock, nor did Gringo meet him again during the afternoon's proceedings.

That same evening, at five minutes to eight, a cab deposited the gallant soldier at 67 Onslow Road, and he rang the bell with the liveliest hopes of a very pleasant evening. On being ushered into the drawing-room he was thunderstruck at seeing "The Cemetery" laughing and joking with his hostess.

"Oh, Captain Gringo," said the fair lady, "I'm so glad you've come. Your friend, Mr Woking, lunched with me, and—"

"Lunched with you, did he?" exclaimed Gringo. "Well, I've just dropped in to say that I can't accept your hospitable invitation to dinner."

And he fled from the house, leaving the faithless "Cemetery" master of the ceremonies.

Some one's  
Trousers.

It is very curious for what trifles a decree *nisi* may be obtained in the Divorce Court. A beauty who was rather flighty—I may remark that she is still living and has been married three or four times—was residing in a house at Windsor, her husband being in town and not expected home for some nights. Unluckily he returned unexpectedly, and being very fond of his wife, thought he would not disturb her, so he crept into his dressing-room, and without even striking a match to light a candle, he undressed himself, after which he proceeded to her bedroom. To his surprise he found the door locked, and after knocking, was answered by touching groans. Between these he learned that the lady had spasms or something, which necessitated his getting some brandy for her at once. He asked her to get up and give him the keys of the cellar, but she excused herself by saying that there was no brandy left, and that he must go to a public-house in the neighbourhood and get some. Like the good husband that he was, he flew off on his errand of mercy, only stopping meanwhile in the dark dressing-room to get into his clothes. Making the best of his way to a neighbouring public-house, he ordered the bottle of brandy, and putting his hand into his trouser pocket to get the money to pay for it, to his astonishment he drew out several sovereigns, other coins, and a bunch of keys which certainly did not belong to him.

On his return to his spouse, whose bedroom door he found unlocked, there was naturally a scene, and

as I remarked at the beginning of this *chestnut*, for such trifles are decrees *nisi* granted.

#### Her Portraits

Speaking of the ease with which divorce court evidence is secured, I am reminded of the story as to how a husband made sure of the identity of a co-respondent. A young gentleman, a mutual friend of the husband and wife, had paid great attention to the latter, but there was apparently nothing very compromising. He lived in a flat, one of many in a large building where others were to let, and one day, the porter, showing two gentlemen over some empty rooms, was asked by them to allow them to have a look at our young friend's apartments. At first he was uncertain if he could do so, as he had no duplicate key of the special lock which secured the front door. Luckily, or unluckily, the oak was not sported, and the two visitors were shown in. After admiring the furniture and decorations, one of them proceeded to take down the many photographs of a pretty woman that adorned the mantelpiece. The hall porter naturally objected to these proceedings, and was informed by the raider that the photographs were of his wife, and that his companion was a solicitor.

#### A Turncoat.

More divorce made easy. As usual the co-, a well-known actor, was very friendly with both husband and wife, and one evening the actor took the countess to the theatre without the earl, after having dined with the couple at their town house. What happened between dinner and the return home I know not, but when they arrived the door was opened by the husband, who would take



no denial of his invitation that the actor should stay to supper; indeed, so energetic was he that he whipped off his friend's Inverness cape and discovered his guest arrayed in a bright blue smoking-jacket instead of the black swallow tail in which he had dined. Explanations were, of course, forthcoming, but they were not considered satisfactory to the husband, who in due course obtained a decree *nisi*.

**A Distant Relation.** Still another little yarn about the court presided over by Sir Francis Jeune. A lady who had not long obtained the decree absolute against her husband, met some one at dinner who remarked that he had that day been at a wedding of a man who bore the same name as she did (her late husband, in fact). "Is he a relation of yours?" he inquired. "Yes," she answered, "a distant connection of mine by marriage."

**A Modest Waiter.** This is not a divorce story, although evidently the class of customers who affected the restaurant were somewhat flighty in nature. A very good fellow took his young wife one evening after the theatre to a private room at a restaurant. Why he should have done so, goodness only knows, unless it was that he wished to revive some of the memories of his youth. They were shown into the room close on midnight, and the obsequious waiter began dusting imaginary crumbs off an immaculate tablecloth. "What will you have, my dear?" said the husband, scanning the bill of fare. "I don't think I want anything, my dear," replied his spouse. At this, the waiter, with injured

look, intervened, saying, "We don't allow that sort of thing here, miss."

**Another Mis-understanding.** Speaking of private rooms reminds me of another *chestnut* in which the parties concerned were not married by any manner of means. As a matter of fact she was a pretty chorus girl, and he was an admirer who had devoted much of his time to taking her out to many suppers. On one evening after the *hors d'œuvres* had vanished, she remarked artlessly, "Do you know, I like you, because you do not talk coarsely," to which the host responded in his best manner, "*Honi soit qui mal y pense.*" "You dirty beast," replied the lady, "you might wait till after supper."

**Under Cover.** Quite recently I hear that a Club in Paris has initiated the idea of placing all members' letters when they arrive at the Club in envelopes addressed to the members for whom the correspondence is intended, by the hall porter. This innovation might, with advantage, be adopted in England, for I know of at least one case when, in the absence of the janitor, a member of a Club went to the rack where the letters are kept, and discovered one addressed to a fellow member in the unmistakable handwriting of his wife. Nor is it so long since that a lady successfully divorced her husband through the medium of asking for his letters at his Club, which the ingenuous porter handed her. As may be supposed, the correspondence was of an incriminating nature.

In the old days it was a matter of reproach to

have been through either the Bankruptcy or Divorce Courts, but now so many have run the gauntlet of either or both that it is extremely difficult to know who has not been in Carey Street or before Sir Francis Jeune. This was very much brought home to me by hearing the advice of a man to one he had met at dinner that evening, and who he probably found somewhat depressed. By way of saying the right thing he remarked: "You seem a lonely sort of chap. You ought to get married." As a matter of fact, the person to whom he offered this sage advice had already been through the Divorce Court three times.

**Ill-Timed  
Advice.**

**Good Advice.** It is curious the amount of interest people take in reports of divorce cases. Possibly they have a feeling of sympathy with those undergoing what might be their experience. A very loving couple I know used to gloat over the law cases reported in the *Special Standard*; the husband reading the details to his spouse. One evening, after finishing a particularly salacious divorce case, he gravely remarked to his better half, "If I thought you had done such a thing I'd kill myself." To which her laconic reply was, "Shoot."

**Checkmated.**

As most people know, when travelling by an American railway, the passenger at the depôt of departure hands over his baggage to the officials, and on payment of a fee receives a metal check, which he returns in exchange for his trunks on arrival at his destination. The system has its advantages, but it has also its drawbacks—notably, the

fatal one of loss of the checks, for the baggage-master will only hand over the luggage on receipt of the vouchers.

A leading light of English Comic Opera, Miss C. P., was going from New York to Philadelphia to join a company. Like a prudent young woman she had packed away her dollar bills in her swanbill corsets, but her baggage checks she had left in her pocket. Presently she fell asleep and did not fully awake till, in a "semi-dozy" state, she fancied she felt a slight pull at her dress. Opening her eyes she found that a very gentleman-like looking man was sitting next to her. She put her hand in her pocket. The checks were gone. At the moment she did not know what to do. The conductor was not in the car, and even had he been, what proof had she to suppose an accusation against her neighbour? After reflection, she resolved to bide her time and trust to fortune, for her friends would meet her at Philadelphia. The situation was peculiarly unpleasant, for her boxes contained her jewellery and costumes, besides her clothes. At last Philadelphia was reached. She got up. The gentleman-like man got up. The baggage-master appeared. An inspiration seized her. "This gentleman," she said, pointing to her companion, "has got my checks." Utterly flabbergasted, the thief pulled the precious vouchers out of his pocket, handed them to the baggage-master, and vanished into the night.

**Another True Parrot Story.** I remember once—for the whirligig has made many strange twists—being a purser on board a boat that plied between Vera Cruz and New York. Now, parrots

at Vera Cruz cost about four dollars apiece, and if you can get them into New York in good condition, any fancier will give you eight dollars for what you paid four for—as many as you can give him. We were *en route* for New York, the return voyage from Vera Cruz, when at Havana—more notorious now than it was then when the Maine and Matanges and its mule were still in the womb of time—there came on board an elderly Spanish dame, carrying with her a cage, and in it a parrot, a most wonderful bird, which could talk like a native. The way the lady tended that bird was a sight to behold. She couldn't have been more careful of it if it had been a rich uncle whom she wanted to keep alive, in order that he might make his will in her favour. Every hour of the day she was feeding this bird. . . . One day one of the firemen, a bit of an ornithologist, but more of a financier, came to me and remarked :—

“Guv'nor, that bird the old lady's got is a beautiful bird. That bird is worth a bit of money. That bird 'ud fetch fifty dollars in New York.”

“Would it?” said I.

“Yes, more'n that,” said he; “and,” he added, apparently without much regard for sequence, “you've got a lot of birds downstairs the same colour as that.”

Next morning, when the dame went as usual to see her bird and feed it, we heard piercing shrieks, regular feminine hysterical shrieks.

Up we went, and anxiously asked what was the matter?

“The bird,” she cried, “the bird has gone mad, and flown at me like a wild cat! Nearly bitten my finger off! And it used to be *so* good.”

We none of us could understand this, but were fertile with theories. Perhaps it had got sunstroke? Perhaps it would be advisable to put it in the shade?

An hour afterwards the old lady found that the bird was as savage as before. She was very distressed, and consulted the captain, who consulted me, who could, of course, offer no explanation.

I believe that amongst the birds I had taken from Vera Cruz to New York, there was one that fetched sixty dollars, being, as the seller explained, a perfect Spanish scholar, and I can only hope that the parrot the old lady took ashore became as good a linguist as the one I sold.

## CHAPTER XXI

A Useful  
Family.

ONCE upon a time, as they say in fairy tales, I was invited to dine with a very notable actress and beautiful woman. I had known her for some years, but this was the first occasion on which I had crossed her threshold. I don't know the nationality of my hostess, but there is no harm in calling her Flanagan. Her abode was furnished in exquisite taste, and the dinner was as good as the wine. Owing to the unexpected absence of two guests, who would have made a *partie carrée*, my hostess and I dined *tête-à-tête*. We were waited on by a portly, rather off-hand butler, a slim, cheeky-looking footman, and a pert page boy.

"Well," said my hostess, as we were enjoying our coffee, liqueurs, and cigarettes, "what do you think of my household?"

"I think your house—" I began, when she interrupted:—

"I didn't say house, I said household. Speak out!"

"Well," I answered, "to put it frankly, I think that footman of yours is rather familiar."

"Perhaps he is," she said, smiling, "but you see he's my brother, and so is the page."

I took this as a good joke, and observed, "And I suppose the butler's your father?"

"Not quite," she replied quietly, "but he's my uncle."

"And," I laughed, keeping up the jest, "your mother cooked the dinner?"

"You've guessed it at once," she answered, "and the housemaid's my cousin. Seriously, I'm telling you the truth. They all mean to live on me, and therefore I make them work for their living."

I was very much astonished, and covering my confusion, blurted out, "And is your lady's maid a relative too?"

"Really," she answered pettishly, "I thought you were more of a man of the world than to ask such a silly question."

This is a true story, and although it may be a bit of a *chestnut* to those who remember the lady in question when she was a prime favourite, say a dozen years ago, it strikes me that it will be new to many of the younger generation of playgoers.

Act I. It is a fearful night, the snow beating down in great gusts and thawing as quickly as it falls, making the roadways sloughs of black slush. On one of the slippery pavements just outside the stage door of a certain West End theatre, a little, tangled-hair waif stops bewildered. Then a tiny voice pipes as the speaker turns piteously towards a stalwart guardian of the peace, and reveals a pinched face with great blue eyes swimming with tears.

"It's all right, I'll move on," with a great childish sob, "I've never moved on faster. Please wait till



I've pulled my boot up—what with your shoving and the long string, I'll trip up if I don't take care."

The policeman turns away, and presently the waif stops again opposite the door whence the light streams over the desolation outside, every time any one crosses the threshold. As the child halts, a burly fireman steps forth and looks out into the night. The glare from the portal falls on the sobbing child.

"Hallo, youngster," says the man in the bright-buttoned coat, "what's this? What are you up to?"

"Oh, please, sir, don't shove—don't shove, I'll move on, indeed I will." But she can't; the waif falls in a heap on the slushy flags.

"Hallo!" says Jim, the fireman, stooping to pick up the bundle of rags in a minute. "There ain't much moving on here." He lifts her in his arms and carries the little motionless body into the playhouse. He carries her up a flight of stairs and stops before a door on which is painted the word, "Wardrobe." Jim gives it a kick with his foot. A fresh-coloured young woman answers his summons.

"Why, lor bless me, Jim, what have you got there?"

"Well, I don't quite know if it's alive or dead, Polly," he replies, "but, anyway, you give her some sort of a hot bath—that rinsing basin of yours will do—and I'll run and get her something warm."

An hour later, when the theatre was about to close, the fireman and his wife held consultation over the newcomer.

"Don't she look different already?" says Mrs Jim. "Soap and water do make a difference, and in that white shawl which Miss de Courey lent her, she's for

all the world like a little angel. There, dearie, have another sip," and the good woman puts the spoon to the waif's lips.

"Her father and mother is both dead, she says," went on Mrs Jim, "and the landlady sent her out to beg, and, poor darling, she don't know the way home."

"Then you shall, Polly," says the fireman, striking his thigh with the flat of his hand. "She reminds me of our own what we lost."

"That's right, Jim," exclaims his wife; and kissing the child, "You'll come with me, my lamb, won't you?"

"Oh, yes," the little one answers, piteously clasping the wardrobe woman's arm. "Don't let them move me on again."

"Never," said the man. The woman murmured "Amen."

This was how Fireman Jim adopted the waif, and how she made her first appearance at the Vanity Fair Theatre.

## Act II.

The years have gone by. The Vanity Fair Theatre is as popular as ever, but more than one well-remembered face is lost to the little world behind the footlights.

There have been many exits as well as many entrances, and among those who have gone are Fireman Jim and his wife. They are not dead, but the once stalwart rescuer of the little waif is a cripple, having lost the use of his legs in the burning of the "Vanity Fair" Scene Dock. He has a small pension, and is as cheerful as ever, and likes nothing better than to hobble round on his crutches to the bar parlour of the Unicorn public-house, where his old

friends mostly assemble. Mrs Jim has also met with misfortune, having been brought to death's door by blood-poisoning, caused by pricking her hand with a needle tainted with toxic dye. She has had to give up her situation at the playhouse, but manages to earn a few shillings a week by sewing. She has not lost her spirits, though she knows that the doctor says that she ought to have complete change of air and live in the country. "Live in the country!" she echoes when the doctor has gone, "then what would become of my old man and my bonnie Nita? God bless the child, how she nursed me when I was ill, and how she slaves for us all in the ballet at the Universe. It's not much a week, but the money's there every Friday night. Why, that's her coming up the court now, I can hear her laughing with the children."

Two minutes afterwards Nita skips into the room, golden-haired and blue-eyed as she was eleven years ago when Fireman Jim carried her through the stage door, but who would have thought that the little pale bud would ever have developed into this fair young blossom? Strictly beautiful, Nita, perhaps, is not, but she has that form of feature which, by its continual change of expression, is infinitely more attractive than the regular lines of classic models, and her movements are grace itself. Moreover, she is so lively and good-tempered, so unselfish and good-natured, that her associates have nicknamed her "Sunbeam." She is a member of the troupe organised by Madame Roderici, the great Italian ballet mistress and the finest pantomimist in the world. To have been one of her pupils is a guarantee that a girl can always be relied on in her business.

"Well, mother," says Nita, taking off her hat and kissing Mrs Jim, "I've got some good news to-day."

"I'm glad to hear that, dearie," replies the other. "What is it?"

"You must know that Madame is putting on the new ballet, *The Fallen Star*, at the Vanity Fair, and—and"—here she hesitates—"she has given me a better place than I've had as yet."

"Of course I'm glad of that, darling, but you know, having always been associated with real actresses, not to speak of ladies of the chorus, I don't much hold to flippity flop, as I call it. However, it's for your good, I suppose, and that's enough for me. And at the old 'Van,' as we used to call it, that's curious. This'll only be the second time you've passed the stage door during a performance."

"It will be very different to the first, dear mother, won't it?" says Nita, "and now I want you and father to do me a favour."

"What's that, dearie?"

"I want you and Dad to come on the first night. See, I've got tickets for you in the upper circle."

"Well I never, this is something," cried Mrs Jim. "Two old cripples being asked to a first night! What next, I wonder! But I'll talk it over with father."

I suppose that the consultation with the ex-fireman was satisfactory, for on the eventful evening behold Mr and Mrs Jim in their best clothes in the front row of the balcony at the "Van." A comic opera is played first, and then followed the new ballet, on which, if report speaks truly, the management had lavished thousands on the production, and also engaged a new *première danseuse*, Mdlle. Agnita Bellajio, unknown in London, to play the title role,

"The Fallen Star." The opening scene is exquisite in every way, representing an island of the Pacific peopled by the most beautiful fairies, attendant apparently on a prince who has fixed his affections on a beautiful star in heaven. Then follows his dumb but passionate invocation to his divinity above, and then the descent of the astral beauty, who, by a clever stage device, seemed literally to fall from the skies. At first Mdlle. Bellajio seems a bit nervous, but in a few moments she has made herself felt by the audience. She is the humming-bird of poetic motion as she darts from one group of flowers to the other. The house bursts into one great roar of approval, repeated again and again. It quite drowns the astonished observation of a man with crutches and his wife by his side.

"Well, I'm blowned," he gasps, "if that isn't our own Nita."

And so it is. She has kept the secret of her identity at the request of Madame, and she is delighted at the unlooked-for pleasure which she has given her adopted parents. Her second appearance at the Vanity Fair Theatre was scarcely heralded by her first. I may not lift the curtain again. I need not state that Mr and Mrs Jim no longer live in the old Court. Miss Nita's reported engagement to a dweller in high life has nothing to do with this story, but if you want to look upon her features, you have only to turn your eyes on the windows of the first photograph shops. You will, perhaps, find her sandwiched between the Archbishop of Canterbury and Mr Dan Leno. Her proper place would, I think, be between the likenesses of those honest, charitable folk, Jim the fireman and his wife.

**A Long Pull  
and a Strong  
Pull**

A leading actor, whom I will call Charley Foote, imagined that among other accomplishments his sculling was the very best to be seen on the river.

Such, too, was the opinion of Jimmy Hand, also an ornament of the stage. One night the matter was purposely introduced at the Greengage Club, when both the oarsmen were present. The bait was swallowed at once, and after considerable discussion a match in skiffs was arranged between the histrionics, the course being from just above Teddington Lock to Thames Ditton, and the stakes (nominally) a "pony" a side. A good start was effected, and amid the cheers of their friends the two champions started on their course, but never did boats travel so slowly. The stream must have been running very fast, for though the drops were rolling down Charley's cheeks and Jimmy was as red as a beetroot, in an hour they had only just reached the Albany Club. "Go it, Jimmy;" "Send her along, Charley," shouted the spectators on the bank, but the most willing barque cannot make headway against a tornado. Almost simultaneously the two competitors stopped sculling.

"It's off," cried Jimmy faintly, "I'm dead beat."

"So am I," exclaimed Charley feebly; "it's a draw."

Up came the steam launch, which had been pottering behind, and the exhausted athletes were lifted on board. As they did so, several kind friends looked after the skiffs and fastened them to the stern of the launch.

"By Jove," said Charley, after he had drained off a pint of shandy gaff, "the current here must be the strongest in the world."

"I'd just as soon row against the rapids of Niagara,"

said Jimmy ; " my arms are shaking like a wind-mill."

" Never mind, old chappies, you both did splendidly," observed the starter, " eh, lads ? "

" Magnificently ! " " Best show I ever saw." " Real plucked 'uns," etc., exclaimed the crowd.

Their praises were richly deserved, for attached to the keel of either boat was a three-gallon stone jar full of water, which was carefully cut off directly the scullers boarded the launch, never mind how I know. Charley and Jimmy became " dry bobs " after this adventure.

**Managerial  
Resource.**

During the period when the Crystal Palace was more extensively patronised than it is now, by the leaders of Society, it was no infrequent occurrence to reserve certain days during the London season, when seven shillings and sixpence were charged for admission to the building, and grand operatic concerts ministered to by artistes from the Royal Italian Opera, drew crowds of the upper ten to Sydenham. On one of the occasions a most unexpected event occurred. The great Mr B. was then the autocrat of the Palace, and as the following fact, hitherto unpublished, will show, was a potentate eminently worthy of his position. On the day referred to, a magnificent array of vocal and instrumental talent had been engaged, and every seat was booked in the West End. By some misunderstandings with the railway companies as to the date, on the very same day a cheap excursion from, I think, Huddersfield, began pouring hundreds of unexpected visitors into the Palace, where, of course, they had to be admitted. But the dismay of the officials may better be imagined than

described, when some two hours before the concert was advertised to begin, the north country folk invaded the hall of harmony and resolutely refused to budge. This terrible state of affairs was reported with fear and trembling to the autocrat. He never winced, but merely said : "Send me the printer and the refreshment contractor at once." Of the former he ordered a number of cards to be struck off without delay, and of the latter he commanded vast amounts of sandwiches, bread and cheese, buns, etc., together with barrels of beer and dozens of mineral waters to be carted to a certain portion of the grounds. An hour before the performance was to begin, officials were distributing tickets among the invaders. The documents invited the fair and gallant visitors from Huddersfield to accept "Free Lunch with Ale and other Refreshments on the Cricket Ground," at the very hour when the Operatic Troupe would appear. The bait took immediately. *Only one person remained in the concert room.* The great B. had not only saved the situation, but also proclaimed the liberality of the Crystal Palace Company in regions remote from Sydenham.



## CHAPTER XXII

**The "Thieves' Kitchen."** WHEN the "Thieves' Kitchen" was first started, the attendance of members, as in most Clubs, was rather scanty, and

when one day a subscriber craved permission to bring in a friend to lunch, I felt almost inclined to request him to bring in all Throgmorton Street. The Club, however, had not been started very long before one of the perennial "booms" was on, and during this period, Arthur Roberts, who occasionally has a flutter in the City, came to lunch with me one day. The Club rooms were very full, and I may remark for the benefit of the uninformed, that my members generally lunched at very long tables. Consequently, when Roberts was taken upstairs to where Kosher fish is more popular than elsewhere, he could not help remarking:—

"Ah! I see, a modern edition of the Lord's supper."

**Stock Exchange Humour.** Some of my members who are on the Stock Exchange, have a pretty humour. The policeman who stands outside one of the entrances to the

House is No. 651, and he is known to the brokers and jobbers as 6½ buyers. Election to the Stock Exchange is not so easy now as it used to be, and there

is a story current of an old member who was seconding a candidate, and when asked by the committee as to how long he had known his nominee, admitted that he had just been introduced to him on the steps of the Stock Exchange. Rather different was the caution of Mr William Ekyn. One of the questions usually put to the proposer for a candidate is whether he could write a cheque for £5000. Ekyn once in reply to this query about some one he was sponsor for, said :—

“ Well, I shouldn't pick him.”

Among the many multi-millionaires South Africa has furnished London with, is one who, although he has since learned to read and write, could do neither in the old days when he was making a fortune at Kimberley. His want of education was a standing joke amongst the members of the Kimberley Club, where he was wont to spend his afternoons, pretending to read a newspaper which he more often than not, held upside down. In those days the English newspapers were not so freely circulated in South Africa, and readers had to depend on a kind of Shipping Gazette style of journal, in which the advertisements were generally headed by the block of a ship in full sail. X, as I will call him, it being useless to try to invent an assumed Jewish name, was holding this newspaper upside down, when a friend approached and put the usual question. “ Well, my boy, what's the news? ” “ Oh noding much,” replied X, “ only a lot of bloomin' shipwrecks,” pointing to the inverted pictures of the sailing vessels.

“ What is it  
causes  
Shipwreck? ”

**The Rascals'  
Club.**

Prophets are not honoured in their own country, neither apparently are brokers or jobbers, although I cannot say that either are particularly good tipsters. City policemen have not a very exalted opinion of members of the Stock Exchange, as is shown by the following little incident :—

A friend of mine went not long since to Paris on a matter of business. He was very hospitably entertained by his French friends, and on leaving the gay city he said to one of them : “Don’t forget if ever you come to London to look me up at my Club, “The Thieves’ Kitchen,” this being the pet name for the City Athenæum Club. Oddly enough, the Frenchman did come to London not long afterwards, and making his way down Throgmorton Street, enquired in broken English of a policeman as to the locality of “The Rascals’ Club.”

This query naturally upset the constable, who, scratching his head, replied : The only “Rascals’ Club” he knew of was that place opposite, indicating the entrance to the Stock Exchange.

**Sausages  
v.  
Suicide.**

It is said that Lord Byron composed better poetry after a full meal of pork chops. Certainly I have known chops and sausages to have a wonderfully resuscitating effect upon a mere man like a stockbroker. One day in the City a stockbroker of my acquaintance, who had unfortunately not been able to meet his engagements, had been, or was, at the point of being hammered, and naturally very despondent. Indeed, he did nothing but talk of suicide, and I am certain that if he could have sent out for a pennyworth of strychnine from the nearest chemist,

he would have done so. As the luncheon hour was waning I persuaded him to try and eat something, and ordered a substantial repast, consisting mainly of chops and sausages. We sat down together to this, I comforting him as well as I could with a few stale, but well meant and sympathetic words of advice. He began to eat and gradually a change came over him : indeed, he consumed so much that there were very little of the chops and no sausages left for me, and by the time he had arrived at coffee and liqueur there was no more talk of suicide. That night I met him at the Empire thoroughly enjoying himself, he having in the meantime found a generous friend to arrange his affairs.

**New Court  
Charity.**

Probably few people are aware of the enormous extent of the charity distributed by the great firm of financiers in St Swithin's Lane. I believe that a special staff is engaged for the distribution of large annual sums, and this staff is in the charge of one of their oldest and most devoted servants, who, naturally, has to be a man of great discretion in the giving away of such large sums of money. Privately, also, all the partners give away large amounts in charity, and like all really generous men, it is in small matters that they are the nicest. The three brothers usually lunch at their office in the City, and it is a well-known custom of theirs to occasionally ask their friends to the midday meal. Sometimes they make this luncheon an opportunity for doing an impecunious person a turn, as happened on one occasion to a man whom we all know. He was retailing his woes to Mr Leopold, who cut him short with the remark :—"Come and lunch in the City to-morrow."

The impecunious one was not over well pleased with being put off, as he thought, with the luncheon, as he at least expected to touch his wealthy friend for a fiver. Imagine his surprise then, when on sitting down to luncheon he found underneath his plate, a note addressed to him, which contained a bank note of considerable value. The story goes that the impecunious one was in such a hurry to get out of the room and have a look at the contents of the envelope, that, for a wonder, he hardly ate any lunch.

**What a Pig!** Another member of the same family, the late Baron James, who habitually resided in Paris, was an extremely witty man. A rather obtuse young man was fawning upon him and describing the merits and beauties of some part of South Africa, through which he had recently been travelling. Ending his flow of language about the new country, he remarked that there were no pigs and no Jews there. The Baron took him by the arm, and escorting him to the door, said, "Allons! my friend, let us go there at once, we should both succeed."

**Saved Him  
Three Quid.** The impecunious one who found the note under his plate has been the pivot of many small stories concerned with the borrowing of small loans from his friends. One evening at a dance, or some such function of the sort, where it is not easy to procure change, Sam of Cork Street, hurried over to me, and asked me to lend him a couple of sovereigns. I assented with pleasure, and was curious to know what he wanted them for. He replied:—"By doing so, you will save

me three pounds, for I see Jumbo coming this way, and I have nothing less than a fiver in my pocket."

**A Christian Schnorrer.** The professional beggar is a subject on which I could write many chapters. The Jews, of course, have their Schnorrers, about whom I have reiterated many *chestnuts*, but I know a stout, well-preserved Christian who could give them a start, and beat them easily. My Christian friend met me one Saturday evening at Eastbourne, and pitched a long yarn as to his having no dinner for himself and wife on the following Sunday. So pathetic was he that I lent him a sovereign, and in return he begged me to come and share their meal.

Looking in at their apartments just before mid-day, to see how they were getting on, to my astonishment, I found my friend and his wife having their nails manicured, paying for this with the money I had lent them.

**Easy to Take Offence.** The same mountain of humanity passed by some friends I happened to be speaking to after the pantomime, on a Boxing night at Romano's. As he went by without taking the slightest notice of one whom I will call Cecil, and to whom he owed many little kindnesses, I was curious to know the reason, and inquired of our mutual friend what he had done that Jumbo should cut him. He pleaded ignorance; the only thing that he could think of was that the borrower had asked him to lend him a fiver on some previous occasion, and having only two sovereigns in his pocket, he handed him that. Since then he had been much troubled for the remaining three pounds,

and as he had not lent these, the consequence was that our fat friend chose to be disagreeable.

Not a Good  
Judge of a  
Cigar.

Mention of Romano's reminds me of a *chestnut* with regard to the very fine cigars which the habitués of that well-known resort used to occasionally gamble for. One unlucky gambler who had had to pay for several cigars which cost him something like 7s. 6d. apiece, at last retired, smoking one of these expensive weeds. As he went along, and not a quarter through his cigar, he met the late Charlie Harris, who, seeing him with this enormous cigar in his mouth, and not knowing from whence it came, and what it cost, made a snatch at it, saying:—"Throw away that beastly thing, and have a good one," drawing out of his pocket his case of sixpenny smokes.

Compounding a  
Felony.

Bank robbery stories are ever interesting, and one occurs to me in which the astuteness of a solicitor pleased both the thief and the directors of the Bank that had been robbed.

One day the Bank cashier called upon the solicitor, and confessed to him that he had robbed his employers of about £5000. He was about to give himself up to justice, but thought he would ask the solicitor's advice before doing so. The solicitor, who, as I remarked, was a very shrewd man, and I may say now occupies a very big position in the law, advised him not to be in a hurry, and casually asked him if he thought he could steal another £5000. The cashier thought he could, and as matter of fact did so, and handed the money to the solicitor,

who then advised him to take a holiday for a few days.

When he had gone, the solicitor called upon the Bank manager, whom he fortunately found present at a Board Meeting. He explained to the manager the sin of the cashier, who he said had confessed to him of the purloining of £10,000 of the Bank's money.

The solicitor added that for the sake of the wife and children of the cashier, his friends had come forward, and he thought that between them they could manage to find £5000, which, if the Bank would accept at the rate of ten shillings in the pound, less, of course, any expenses that the lawyer would be put to, he thought he could arrange it.

The directors and the manager conferred together, and probably thinking that "half a loaf was better than no bread," decided to instruct the solicitor to do what he could for them.

In the end the cashier was not prosecuted, the Bank got half their money back, and the solicitor got his fees.

**Another Bank Robbery.** Here is another story of a Bank robbery, which is, however, a trifle compared to the former.

This manager was in charge of a country branch, was a very good sportsman, and extremely fond of snipe-shooting. A customer of the Bank called in one day, and asked him to have a day's shooting, which he accepted. The customer standing with the door of the manager's room half open, said aloud, so that it should be heard in the Bank itself:

"Well, that's all right?"

"That's all right," repeated the manager, upon which the customer stepped up to the counter, and



presented his cheque for £50, which was promptly cashed, although his account was considerably overdrawn.

**A Client of Coutts'.** The assurance, or perhaps ignorance, of some people, who possess banking accounts, is something extraordinary.

We have all heard of the lady, who, on being informed that her account was overdrawn, replied that that could not be so, because she had still so many cheques left in her cheque-book.

Equally innocent was the man who went into Coutts', and presenting a cheque for a small amount, was shown into the managers' room, where he was informed that his account was already overdrawn.

"Well," said he, "I understand that you have three millions of money to lend?"

The partner of Messrs Coutts smilingly replied that they had.

"Then," said he, "damme, I'm your man."

**Very Green.** This was for a long time a standing joke against a very good fellow new to the City, who, of course, now knows better. It was his first day in the office of his Stock Exchange brother, for they had hopes of him as a commercial success.

"Now then, Cecil," said his brother, putting on his hat at mid-day, "I am going out to lunch, and look to you to have booked a big order by the time I return."

"Well, have you got the order?" asked his brother on his return.

"Oh, yes," said Cecil proudly, "Mr So-and-so came in and planted an order for 10,000 shares."

"To buy or sell?"

"S'elp me, Jimmy, I forgot to ask him which!"

## CHAPTER XXIII

WHEN I first began to jot down these reminiscences I had an idea, and my friends also, I imagine, that they would consist mainly of racing, not racy, stories. To my surprise the yarns about racing, betting, and gambling, that have not, as far as I know, appeared in print, are very few, and most of them not worth retailing. The anecdotes of the race-course, betting-ring and card-room, have been carefully collected and told over and over again, and, as a consequence, gambling stories will not figure largely among these *Chestnuts*.

**His Code of  
Honour.**

A well-known sportsman, who was as great a gambler at cards as he was at racing, was once losing something like twenty or thirty thousand pounds at cards. His opponent, getting tired of going double or quits, at last said :—

“Give me fifty sovereigns ready, old man, and we’ll cry quits.”

In reply the loser said indignantly, “I never compromise a debt of honour.”

**A Novel En-  
dorsement.**

The same sportsman once lost a great deal of money at one of the old roulette hells that used to flourish at Brighton during the Sussex fortnight some years ago.

Having parted with all the ready money he had with him in backing numbers at which the marble never stopped, he finally wrote out a cheque for his losses. Next morning while at breakfast at Princes' Club, an emissary from the roulette proprietor called to see him. It appeared that the cheque he had written was to self or order, and, of course, was worthless until endorsed. B, on seeing it, tore it up, and remarked, "Well, that's settled," sending out word to the messenger that there was no answer.

**Bank Holiday Settling.** Years ago, when there used to be a Bank Holiday meeting on the Monday

after Goodwood, my friend, who had had a very bad time the preceding week, arrived at Sunbury, and going up to Charley Head, who was then alive, inquired the price of some horse for the first race.

Before answering, Head remarked, "By the way, Mr So-and-so, I have not received a cheque from you this morning for Goodwood."

"Oh," replied the backer, "no one settles on Bank Holiday."

"Don't they?" said Head, "then no one bets on Bank Holiday."

**Out of his Depth.** When a prominent backer takes the knock racing, he sometimes has the greatest difficulty to avoid his creditors.

Goodwood is frequently a very unlucky meeting. I remember on one occasion a friend of mine having had very bad luck there. He returned to Brighton and did his best to avoid the bookmakers to whom he owed money. His bad luck, however, still followed him. On going to Brill's baths when he thought that everybody had gone, he no sooner got

in the water than Gus Jacobs popped up next to him and remarked, "Ah, Captain, we meet at last." Probably a swimming-bath was the very last place he expected to find a bookmaker.

**Race-course  
Dodges.**

Very ingenious used the "boys" to be to get into the enclosures at new race meetings when most of the officials were as fresh as the meeting. Sometimes in going through the gate without a brief they would announce themselves as members of the press, and, being further challenged, would ejaculate *Daily Telegraph*, *Morning Post*, *Sportsman*, and so on.

These worked very well for a time, but all the daily newspapers being exhausted, one poor wretch was at his wits' end to invent a newspaper to which he might say he was attached. The only one he could think of was *Funny Folks*, and he, giving this to the janitor, was promptly ejected.

Another time, at Hamilton Park I think, the "wrong 'uns," to get in without paying, passed themselves off as jockeys. Unfortunately one of them was at least six feet high, and could not call himself Loates or Martin. He was not to be beaten, however, but announced himself to the astonished gate-man as the starter.

**An Unconscious  
Tip.**

One of the best wins I ever had in my life was over "Nunthorpe" for the City and Suburban in 1890. The late Colonel North's commissioner one day drew me into a corner and informed me that the right pea for the race was "L'Abesse de Jouarre," and in proof showed me his betting-book. Unluckily for him, but fortunately for me, he showed me a wrong page, which was covered all over with bets relating to

Nunthorpe, which showed that this was the horse he had every hopes would win. I did not say a word but acting on the unconscious tip, backed the winner for a very large sum.

(Note by the Candid Friend.—“Swears put me on a dress suit, the best I ever had, over this winner.”)

**What Price the Favourite?** A pugilist, who had made a little bit of money over a fight, was persuaded by a small firm of bookmakers to take a share in their book and come down to a race meeting with them. When they arrived there, the bookies thought they would make use of him, so sent him to try and find out what price the favourite.

The boxer, who was evidently a novice as regards racing terms, remained away an unconscionable period, and on his return, bearing evidence that he had spent most of his time in a drinking booth, informed his partners with great gravity that “the owner says he won’t sell.”

**Only Trial Stakes.** Another novice, indeed a mug, was taken on by some “boys” at

Epsom, who persuaded him to back a horse for the trial stakes, which is the first race run for on the opening day. As luck would have it, the horse they were supposed to have backed for him was evidently winning in a canter, and the novice shouted out, “We have won! we have won!” but his mentors very soon dashed his hopes to the ground by remarking:—

“What rot, this is the trial stakes; you wait for the real race, and see how he will win then; this is nothing.”

Ned Payne, who was well-known as Morny

Cannon's friend and associate, was once standing next to Mr Harry Milner at Ascot. **Standing in with the Owner.** When the horses were at the post for the race, in which "Millions" had a competitor, Payne asked the owner if he might have a tenner with him, to which that gentleman graciously assented.

While the race was being run, Payne said to Mr Milner, "What price is my tenner, sir?" and Mr Milner was so astonished that he replied four to one, or whatever the odds were that he had obtained, thus returning him forty pounds instead of ten.

**A Greedy Backer.** Some people are never satisfied with their luck. Some years ago, the late George Fredericks, who will be remembered as the proprietor of the "Spooferies," won a thousand pounds over a City and Suburban, and after the next race he was heard cursing his luck, and exclaiming that he never could back two winners in succession.

As a matter of fact, he had dropped a couple of sovereigns over the last race.

**An Old Soldier.** One of the most ready members of the Brigade of "boys" held the rank of Captain in that distinguished corps. The following anecdote will prove the extraordinary way in which he could adapt himself to circumstances and materially profit thereby. Sauntering into the bar of the Wellington one afternoon, his quick ears overheard the following conversation:—

"Is it true that Willoughby Jones pulled off that good thing yesterday?" asked a toper of the great Mr Blinkweasel.

"Absolutely," replied Mr Blinkweasel, "he'd 20 to 1 to 250 against "Catch 'em-alive-oh"—You ask Fielder, who laid it."

Shortly afterwards Mr Blinkweasel felt a tug at his coat sleeve, and turning round, was confronted by the Captain, who said in a hoarse whisper :—

"I say, Colonel" (the Captain always made others his superior officers when in action), "could you lend me a dollar for a couple of hours?"

"A dollar for a couple of hours," echoed Mr Blinkweasel, "what on earth do you mean?"

"What I say," answered the Captain. "You lend me a dollar for one hundred and twenty minutes, and I'll bring you back two thick 'uns—so help me never. Fact is, I want to do the toff in a cab."

Mr Blinkweasel was not particularly fond of the Captain, but the amount of interest tickled his commercial instincts.

"Well, Captain," he said, "here's the oof, but mind I shall hold you to your bargain."

"You bet on me," cried the Captain. "My motto is—'Play the strict game and honour among'"—here he coughed and said, "'gentlemen.'"

Mr Willoughby Jones was a very extraordinary personage. He was at one and the same time a theatrical manager, a race-horse owner, and a publican on a large scale, and he was generally to be found of an afternoon sampling his own liquor at his favourite hostelry. It was to this establishment that the Captain dashed up in his hansom; entering the saloon bar he found, as he expected, the proprietor, more or less joyful, with a bottle of the "boy" before him.

"Tell my cab to wait," shouted the Captain to the chucker-out.

"Hallo!" said Mr Willoughby Jones, "you're going it, Captain?"

"Must keep the ball a-rolling, General," responded that worthy. "A glass of your own particular with pleasure," and he helped himself to a tumbler of champagne.

"Well," said the Captain after a pause, "you pulled it off all right yesterday?"

"Yes," grunted Willoughby Jones, "you're right. But what's it got to do with you?"

"What's it got to do with me?" exclaimed the Captain in an injured tone. "Well, I like that, General, upon my sibby, I do. Didn't I give you the office?"

Willoughby Jones stared at him in half dazed fashion, and then said, "Now, that's funny, I couldn't remember who it was. It was you, was it?"

"On my sacred word of honour, it was," answered the Captain.

"Well, what now?" asked Willoughby Jones.

"Only," replied the old Guardsman, "where do I come in?"

"What do you think is fair?" inquired Willoughby Jones, slowly.

"I don't want to be greedy," replied the Captain, "but I think I ought to have a hundred, that's not grasping, is it, General?"

"No, I can't say it is," said the hotel, race-horse, play-house proprietor, diving into his breast pocket, and producing a large pocket-book, from which he extracted a bundle of notes. "There," he observed, handing a roll of them over to the Captain, "there's fifty; that's all the ready I can spare to-day, but come



round to my office to-morrow morning and I'll give you a cheque for the balance."

This yarn is not a romance: it is an absolute fact, yet Willoughby Jones was held to be one of the smartest men of business in London.

Whether Mr Blinkweasel got his two "quid" I know not, but if the Captain held to his "honour among gentlemen" motto, of course the investment was rather better than stock-broking.

**Gambling for an Annuity.** I was always under the impression that the record sitting at cards took place at the Owl Club, a resort started by the late Sam Batchelor about twenty years ago. In those days baccarat in London was something of a novelty, and possibly more fascinating than it is now. Two players, one was the "Elephant," played single baccarat (a most monotonous game) all one Saturday night and the greater part of the following Sunday, a third man, "Tommy," kindly sat with them as scorer. At the end of the sitting one of the players, the "Elephant," I think, had lost so much money, that it was quite impossible for him to pay, but after much negotiation the winner accepted £500 a year for life. This lengthy gamble, has, however, been exceeded.

**Prolonged Poker.** An American friend of mine, who was the member of a small poker club in New York, tells me that he and some dozen members were playing cards when the great blizzard of 1887 began. As they went to the door to go home to dinner, they found the streets impassable, and for four days they were prisoners in the poker room. They took it in turns, keeping watch, he called it, to sleep on the only couch the club room possessed, while the other men, who were awake,

played poker and smoked. Oddly enough, on the day of their release, a train full of children, who had also been snowed up on the elevated railway, came to a stop in front of the club windows, and were rescued by the aid of ladders.

It Depends  
Where You  
Stand.

The day after "Donovan" landed the Derby for the Duke of Portland in 1889, a country customer called upon Mr George Krehl, the popular proprietor of that excellent restaurant, Verrey's in Regent Street, and explained to him that he had been robbed at Epsom of a valuable gold watch and chain. He especially mourned the loss of his timekeeper, because it was a presentation watch. A friend had told him that perhaps Mr Krehl could help him to recover it, his knowledge of London life being varied and extensive. Mr Krehl laughingly observed that this was rather a dubious compliment, but promised that he would do his best. In the meantime, he advised the country cousin not to advertise any reward, and to keep quiet over the matter till he heard from him. The visitor having given a full description of his property, and promised a very substantial reward for its restitution, departed with a hopeful heart. His friend was right in surmising that Mr Krehl would probably be able to get on the right track, for the proprietor of Verrey's is one of the foremost dog fanciers in the world, and those who indulge in canine pursuits are sure, sooner or later, to become acquainted with gentry who are not very particular as to the different meanings of *meum* and *tuum*. Accordingly he sent for an individual, who knew a "pal," who knew some one else, who knew a man supposed to be a receiver of stolen goods.

"If what your friend says is right, Mr Krehl," he observed, "you may rely upon having that ticker back within three days, or even less."

However, at the end of a week he turned up looking very crestfallen, and said, "I'm blowed if that bloomin' watch business ain't fairly beat me. Now, are you quite certain that your friend lost it at the Derby?"

"Absolutely certain," answered Mr Krehl. "He told me where he was sitting in Barnard's Stand."

The would-be recoverer's face became clouded with deep disgust.

"Barnard's Stand," he cried, "Barnard's Stand! Why, I thought your pal was a gentleman, *as mixed with Gentlemen*. It ain't a bit of use your coming to me over a job like this."

## CHAPTER XXIV

**How I went to the Cape.** I WENT to Waterloo to wish some friends good-bye who were going to the Cape. On the platform one of the departing said :—

“Come down to Southampton, and have lunch on board. You will be back in town by eight o'clock to-night.”

So I went, and in due time we got on board the *Dunvegan Castle*, Captain Robinson, whose pet name is derived, I understand, from his fondness for holding short services twice a day.

Seated at lunch, it was suggested to a millionaire friend of mine what a lot of good a trip to Madeira would do him, he feeling very seedy.

“I'd go like a shot,” said he, “only I shouldn't have any clothes.”

“Clothes,” said they, “you don't want any clothes for two days. We'll lend you a shirt or two.”

“All right,” said he, “I'll go, and I'll stand the exes of any one who will come with me.”

He appealed to several, whose answer was, they couldn't, they had no clothes. Then he turned to me :—

“You'll come with me, you don't care a damn about clothes?”

Several members of the committee of my Club were present, and they, regarding the proposition as chaff, said :—

“Yes, certainly go. You won’t be away more than four days.”

“Right you are,” said I to “M.”, “if you go, I’ll go.”

“A drink on it.” And we sealed the compact.

Still, the others believed it to be merely spoof, and also I thought “M.” didn’t really mean it.

Then came a little speculation on the event, and we bet ’em a “pony” we would go and a “pony” we would not, so that between us we must win either way.

Next, my friend thought he would like to see the money staked, so he said to the syndicate, “You give me a fiver each, that is £25, between you, and if we don’t go, I’ll hand you back £50. I know,” he added *sotto voce* to me, “we’re going, and we may as well have the money to spend.”

A quarter past four came, and all the guests were leaving the ship—the mails having come aboard—and even then the fellows declined to believe we were going, thinking we were going to hop off at the last minute. From the gangway they shouted :—

“If you’re not going to Madeira you’d better hurry off the ship and get the train and give us the £50.”

We didn’t move, and at last they had to bolt for their train.

In another quarter of an hour the ropes were cast off and we were steaming down Southampton water, I feeling very miserable. But being there, I thought I had better make myself as comfortable as possible, so I went to the purser and asked him what berths he could give us. The ship was full but “M.”

managed to secure a berth, and the second steward gave up his for a consideration. He did not come from South of the Cheviots. Well, thought I at dinner, as I reflected that I ought then to have been dining in London with Joe and my American cousin, "in for a penny in for a pound." What is good enough for a millionaire is good enough for an old chop-seller.

Very few appeared at table ; the first night at sea is a ticklish time for the inexperienced, but we secured a good table, and with our friend "A." and one or two others we had a right merry dinner. A first night at sea was no new experience to me, for years ago I had been a purser on board ship myself, and so had no difficulty with my sea legs, or sea stomach. Dinner over, I had a game of dominoes with my host. He won. He was the best domino player I ever met. After looking at his hand—I didn't let him look at mine—he could tell me exactly how many points he would win by or lose by—a wonderful ability.

**My Clothes  
Ruined.** In my bunk I was soon sound asleep . . . I awoke with a start, and found myself cold and deluged, while my clothes—the only clothes I had on board—were gaily floating on the floor of the cabin. I had forgotten to close the porthole. That was all. Here was I—two o'clock A.M. Sunday—wet to the skin—half asleep and half awake, wondering where the devil I was, and if really at sea, how the devil I got there. I got out of bed, and dripping, dejected, and dismal, went in search of the night steward, to whom I explained my sad plight. He was, like all sailor men, a cheerful fellow.

"Never mind, guv'nor," said he, "worse things have happened," and with that he went and closed the porthole. Looking at the bunk, he remarked :—

"You can't sleep there to-night."

"What am I to do?"

"You must put other clothes on."

I told him I hadn't any, and explained how matters stood.

"I really don't know what to do." Surveying my clothes he remarked with great truth: "My clothes won't fit you. You'll be an awkward size to fit on the ship. In the meantime I'll try and borrow a rig-out for you. Better rest in the dining-saloon to-night, and I'll see if I can get your clothes dried for you when the cook opens his kitchen in the morning."

I thanked him very sincerely, and told him I would never forget his kindness. As a small token of my appreciation I gave him a quid; and I think he would not have objected had I left my porthole open every night of the voyage.

In the morning I was introduced to the head steward, who was of the same opinion as the night steward, that clothes for me might be hard to find. He thought and thought. "Ah," said he at last, brightening up, "I think there is one of the engineer officers who is about your size." Joy! joy! "But whether he will lend you his clothes or not, I cannot say. He is a Scotchman, and may sell them to you, though."

"Money," I said, "is no object."

**I Borrow a  
Uniform.**

The second engineer, the officer in question, was a good, genial sort of soul, who sympathised with me, but expressed the belief that he was even bigger than

I. However, he showed me a suit of clothes, and I put them on. He was quite right. He was bigger than I, and the trousers, waistcoat, and jacket, would each go round me once and a half; however, regrets were useless, and after a bath, a brush up, etc., I put on the uniform, and a pretty sight I looked! I was afraid to move, for I knew the larks my friends would be up to, and the laugh they would have. But I had always plenty of cheek, so I steered for the saloon and sat down to breakfast, and as luck would have it, they had not arrived. At last they came. Astonishment was written on their faces.

"What the devil do you mean?" they asked. "You're not at a Covent Garden fancy dress ball."

I said: "I have had great trouble," and I sadly explained to them the sad plight I had been in since I saw them. After breakfast—the rig-out, by the way, did not interfere with my appetite—I said to "M.", "What had I better do?"

"My dear fellow," said he, "I don't know, you look all right; come on deck."

With a little persuasion I went on deck, where my appearance caused no little astonishment to the captain and crew. The captain simply couldn't make it out at all—one of his officers' uniforms on a man he had never seen. My millionaire friend went and explained; and even our worthy and sedate captain smiled.

Fortunately for me the ship was now rapidly getting into the Bay of Biscay, and only seasoned voyagers were able to be about. It was very, very rough—the roughest experience the captain ever had of the Bay; so he said, and I quite believe him.

By Monday morning they had quite dried my



clothes, and I felt more comfortable, though still reflecting that I was a bit of an ass to leave my beloved London, and come to Madeira with only one suit of clothes. On Tuesday morning I found myself gazing upon the delightful and beautiful island.

No Clothes  
in Madeira.

“Now,” said “M.”, coming alongside me; “buck up, old chap, we’ll soon get you some clothes” Landing at Madeira, we found exquisite scenery, bathed in genial sunshine, a change from the fog, and cold, and drizzle, from which we had so recently emerged. What struck me most on the island was the enormous number of beggars and cripples who beg, and, if they dare, steal from you. Said my friend to one of them: “Damn it, you were lame a little while ago, and now you’re armless, and probably if I give you something this time you’ll come up blind. Be off!”

I learned that most of these beggars and thieves were ruled by the priests, and that whatever they stole or begged, they handed a proportion of to their spiritual advisers, whom they held in great reverence and awe. But beggars and thieves on one side—we found that through the delay, caused by the roughness in the Bay, we had missed the boat that was to take us back to England.

Here was a pretty pickle to be in! I felt like the poor girl who had come to London for the first time and lost her way. For once in my life, I really felt broken-down, not knowing in the least what I should do. Thoughts of the “Thieves’ Kitchen,” and my members, rose up before me. What, I reflected, shall I do?

“There may not be another boat for a week,” said

"B.", "come on to the Cape! Send a wire home saying, 'Lost boat.' You can see Cape Town and catch the boat back, and the difference will make only about twenty-one days."

After a lot of persuading and talking to, we sent off the wire, and I also sent a long wire to my good friend the baronet, explaining my position, and asking him to wire me at Cape Town. My thoughts were not cheerful. "Cheer up, 'Swears,'" said they, "you are not shipwrecked, you are well looked after. And, as the boat starts at four, we had better go about Madeira and get you some clothes."

Would you believe it, although I weighed only 15 st. 7 lb., there were no shirts, boots, or clothes of any description on the Island of Madeira that would fit me! They said they would make them; but that was no good, and the only thing I got on the Island of Madeira was a straw hat!

A Rig-out at Africa, and barring the straw hat, I  
Last. was no better off for clothes than I

had been when I went on board at Southampton. I felt miserable, for we were done with rough seas and sea-sickness, and all the passengers were parading the deck in the fine sunshine. The ladies in gay attire, and the gentlemen rigged out in togs to suit the climatic conditions. A pretty contrast I made, in borrowed shirts that were unfortunately only fourteen inches round the neck, and I take seventeen and a half. The weather was very, very hot—tropical—and there was I wandering about in heavy winter clothes with a thick ulster over them to

hide the fact that my neck had no collar round it. After dinner, "M." said to me :—

"Look here, 'Swears,' you have got one chance, my boy, you must try and pal up with a passenger as fat as yourself, and then with your persuasive tongue, if you don't get a suit of clothes and some shirts, I'm a Dutchman!"

And his words came true more quickly than I had imagined they would. I never travel anywhere but what I meet some one I know—probably owing to my connection with the "Pelican," where I had 1400 members—and in strolling around, just after "M." had spoken, I came across one of them.

"Good Lord!" said he, "is it you, 'Swears,' and whatever are you doing in that get-up?" I explained. "'Swears,'" said he solemnly, "if you hadn't sat up so late at the 'Pelican' drinking, you wouldn't have grown so stout, and I should have been able to lend you some clothes. I never drink too much."

But luck was with me. From him I learned, that just after leaving Madeira an altercation—probably springing from too much of the Island's namesake—had arisen between an American and one of the other passengers, and they had fought, the result being a black eye for the representative of those States. When I found him, he was melancholy, and had a handkerchief to his eye.

"My friend," said I, "I will help you," and my experience at the "Pelican" stood me in good stead. From the doctor I got arnica, and from the *chef* a nice piece of rump steak. I rubbed the arnica on to the eye, put the steak over it, and bound it on with a bandage in a style that Dr Smith remarked would have

done credit to Guy's. Then we adjourned, and the Yankee thanked me most profusely.

"Not at all, old chap," said I, and after one or two conversational moves, I reached the subject of my sad sartorial plight.

"Is that all?" said he. "Come down to my cabin, and I'll see if I can rig you out."

I went, and fortunately for me, he was able, with the aid of a little loosening here and there, to fit me out right royally. Words failed me to express my gratitude, and I felt that Providence must have had something to do with the eye. Even the collar was there, the necktie was of the exact shade that I liked, and the clothes were of my favourite colour. I thanked him again, and lugged to my cabin a portmanteau with everything he would lend me in it. Then after a shave and a brush up, I sauntered forth, proud as a bantam cock after a victorious fight.

"Hallo," said the millionaire as I went on deck, "where on earth did you get them? Wonderful! Clever as I am, I believe that if we two started from Salisbury Plain with nothing on, and no money, to reach London, and get clothes on the way, you'd beat me. Splendid!"

Feeling quite happy in my newly found clothes, having introduced my friends to their lender, and having presented him with a box of cigars I had sneaked from my millionaire friend, I began to look around philosophically, and to really enjoy myself. My friend of the "Pelican" spread the news of our extraordinary excursion, and much consideration and sympathy came our way. I availed myself of our friends, and was civil and cheerful to every man about my own size, telling him

stories, standing him drinks, after which I generally managed to borrow some article or other of wearing apparel. I even went to the length of approaching the wife of my millionaire friend and saying that her husband said I could borrow a few of his socks, the result being a loan of six pairs of the very finest silk. I don't think my friend meant me to have his very best socks. Probably his wife had made a mistake, for later in the day he came to me and asked me if I would mind lending him two or three pairs of socks back again. I was getting a nice wardrobe together. Then I met the thin chap who had blackened the eye of the Yankee.

"Why is it," he asked, "that you have so much sympathy for that fat Yankee? Why none for me?"

"My dear friend," said I, "I would have shown sympathy with you, I would have been kind to you, I would have helped you—had you been fat!"

Fun on the  
Steamer      All my troubles were over, so I could enjoy the usual rollicking fun on board ship—sports, races, quoit-throwing, and all the rest of them.

Over and above all, we had a fancy dress ball,—prizes to be given for the best impromptu get-up on the part of the men and also of the women. Now there happened to be on board one gentleman who had been to Alias's and had got a very fine fancy dress costume, which must have cost fifty or sixty guineas, and it seemed pretty certain that he was the man for the prize. But he wasn't. We found amongst the steerage passengers a very comical looking old fellow, and my friends and I dressed him up as a London tramp. We cut one half off one boot,

giving him a realistic limp, and the *tout-ensemble* was *chic*. He waltzed in an easy first, much to the chagrin of the gent with the sixty guinea suit. I went as a *chef*, some of them remarking that if I didn't look that part I ought to, and came in second. Then a great potato race was arranged between two of the richest men aboard, for which sandwichmen patrolled the deck announcing:—

## GREAT INTERNATIONAL POTATO RACE.

### ONLY MILLIONAIRE COMPETITORS

#### *Under Southern Cross Rules, etc.*

It was a comical business. The millionaires went into strict training, and the betting was fast and furious. After a rather longer and stiffer spell of exercise than usual, "M." said to me, he must have a drink. Over the drink said he:

"Look here, I'll win. I'm bound to win."

"Why?"

"Because I have a potato in my jacket in case of accidents."

Then we had the usual pool-selling as to the distance done by the ship. You each buy your number and an auctioneer is appointed, who puts the different numbers up for auction. A fancied number may fetch £3. After the lot has been disposed of, the money taken is divided into three prizes, the first of which goes to the holder of the number nearest the number of miles that has been traversed within the last twenty-four hours. And weren't the possessors polite to the officers and the engineers, by way of

finding out what the runs would approximately be? No use. They can tell you nothing, and the attentions are thrown away. It is quite as difficult for them to tell you as it is for me to give you the winner of next year's "Cesarevitch." The millionaires imparted novelty to the sport, however, frequently laying out £50, £60, or £100, and two of the greatest buyers always handed what little there was in their wins from the pool to the captain for the Seaman's Home.

It was on board ship, near the Southern Cross, and we were indulging in cock-fighting. "M." bet another passenger that his man would win. So the representatives of these two rich gentlemen set to work, and it was a close contest, but in the final "M's." man seemed inclined to go over. Out shot "M's." foot, and gave him the necessary push to restore equilibrium.

"Look here," cried the other, "that's not fair. It's cheating."

"Well," said "M." soothingly, and in true sportsman-like spirit, "I'd have done it for your man—if I'd backed him."

Going from Cape Town to Johannesburg, I may explain to the uninitiated, takes two days and two nights, and you have your food in the train. I may add that it is not the kind of food that you get at Prince's or the Savoy. We started for the North about six o'clock in the evening, and about seven the waiter came round to ask what would the gentlemen have for dinner. But "M." came to the rescue, as he generally did.

"Swears," said he to me, "fetch me that hamper

over there." With the aid of the conductor I placed it on the table. And a very fine hamper it was—as I saw when opened—quite in the Ascot-Goodwood sort of style.

"Come in and have your dinner, old man," shouted he to one of our party.

"Ah, by Jove," replied he, "I didn't know you had a hamper like that."

"There are lots of things you don't know," responded "M." as he unloaded the chickens, the ham, the tongue, and the bottles of the "boy."

All of a sudden there was a big din in the next compartment. Looking over, we found that our neighbour was having a fierce altercation with his black servant, whom he was calling everything but a white man.

"What's the matter?" asked "M." solicitously.

"This servant of mine has left my hamper behind," said our friend in the next compartment with much verbal embroidery and fireworks.

"Very likely in the luggage," said "M.": "never mind, come and dine with me, I have a good hamper. Plenty for all of us. And we can have a bit with you to-morrow."

"All right," said the invited guest, "but I have got a friend."

"Never mind, fetch him along."

They came along, and we helped them to what was left, when our guest, who had been seen examining his knife and fork, cast an eye towards the basket, and yelled—

"By all that's holy, you've got my luncheon basket!"

"What! Your basket!" and profuse were the



apologies of "M." as he cursed me for my stupidity. "Never mind," he added consolingly to the owner, "the mistake is made and can't be helped. We'll go on feeding to-night, and you and your friend can participate in our hamper to-morrow night."

By "to-morrow night" we had reached Johannesburg, and passed into the realm where railway luncheon baskets are superfluous.

It was solo whist. I proposed.  
**Millionaire** "M." got hold of my hand, and said,  
**"Solo"**

"Let's look at your hand, make clubs trumps, and I'll go halves."

The gentleman sitting next to my adviser very naturally expostulated; said it wasn't fair that "M." should look at my hand. Said my partner soothingly, "What's the matter? He has never played the game before."

We won the thirteen tricks.

Another time "M." looked over a friend's shoulder, and his friend, turning round, said indignantly, "What now, sir! You're looking at my cards!"

"Well, what of it," said "M.", "I've seen my own."

Being in Johannesburg with my  
**A Visit to** millionaire friend, I was anxious to see  
**Kruger.** Pretoria, and was charmed to hear

"M." announce one day that he was about to visit Dr Leyds and Kruger.

"Can I come?" I asked.

"Certainly," said he. "You will be my private secretary."

First we called on Dr Leyds—seemingly a very pleasant, agreeable man. Having an affection of the throat, and my voice striking him as not of the tenor

variety, we got into an earnest and lengthy conversation on the subject of laryngitis.

"M." stood it for some time, but at length interposed.

Touching me on the shoulder, he remarked: "Look here, I have come to see Dr Leyds on business, not to talk about you fellows' throats, and such like."

"Pretty secretary, isn't he?" he added to the doctor. "A secretary ought to have writing paper, pens, and ink with him. When I opened his bag I found only sandwiches! These he has eaten."

While the two talked over State Secrets the doctor's secretary showed me over the private offices.

The interview over, "M." and I, accompanied by an interpreter, were taken to the private residence of the great, almighty, dynamite Kruger.

We walked up through the mead, through a little wicket, and there, in all its dazzling glory, we saw Kruger's far-famed bodyguard, which suggested nothing so much as unshaven Italians, without sufficient money to get organs on hire.

Kruger's personal appearance is so well known to the British public through the medium of the illustrated papers, that it is quite unnecessary for me to describe it at any length. He is a big, burly, loose-jointed, and powerfully built old man, and looks as if he would have been an exceedingly awkward customer to tackle in a rough-and-tumble, even a few years ago. He wears a greyish-white Newgate fringe, and a quantity of unkempt, grey-brown hair; he is rarely seen without the historic chimney-pot hat, generally brushed the wrong way, and a shabby black tail-coat, much stained as to the front with coffee, I presume, as he is practically a total abstainer. He has a big, rough

voice, and as the taal or language of the country is about the most uncouth and dissonant tongue I ever heard, his address is neither reassuring nor attractive. But that horrible taal with its atrocious gutturals! When two Dutchmen meet they say, "Hoo hadt et?" which means, "How goes it?" but an onlooker would think that they were about to engage in deadly warfare from the sound of their voices; and when they part they growl out, "Good-dag," Anglicé, "Good-day," and the remark sounds exactly like a familiar English oath.

The President is by no means remarkable for his personal cleanliness, and spiteful people say that he does not take a bath more than once or twice a year. However this may be, it is quite certain that the first time he went to the Warm Baths—some natural hot springs between Pretoria and Pietersburg, which are supposed to possess great curative powers—he caught a violent cold, which ended in a severe attack of influenza, and vowed that nothing would induce him to repeat the dangerous experiment. Since then, however, I hear that he has been persuaded to try the baths again, and with beneficial results.

Whether his habits are attractive or otherwise, there is no doubt that Paul Kruger is by no means deficient in personal courage. His record in various wars is an excellent one, and one story in particular, which I have every reason to believe is quite authentic, illustrates his Spartan fortitude in a very marked degree.

When quite a young man, Kruger was away hunting alone in an inaccessible part of the bush, when his gun burst and shattered one of his thumbs. He dressed it as well as he could, but in a day or

two the wound began to mortify, owing to the blazing sun and the want of proper surgical appliances. Seeing that he must either lose his thumb or his life, Kruger deliberately cut off the damaged member with his clasp knife, and then burnt the stump with a bit of wood from his camp fire! A man who has the pluck to perform an operation of this sort must obviously be possessed of an unusual amount of real grit, and I think that his career has proved it, however much I may differ from his views, and his methods of enforcing them upon others.

Kruger must be a very rich man to-day. As President, he receives an income of £8000 a year, a princely revenue for a man of his austere tastes, and is paid in addition £300 or £400 a year "coffee money." This is a sort of entertainment allowance, but I do not believe that he spends £50 a year on coffee, or any other form of refreshment for his guests. He has been frequently accused of all manner of mal-practices in connection with the sale of concessions, the proclamation of gold farms, and so forth, but I doubt whether Kruger himself has ever benefited directly by these dubious transactions. He has, however, a prodigious number of relations, and it is by no means so certain that he has not shut his eyes on more than one occasion to questionable proceedings on their part. Blood, with a Boer, is very much thicker than water, and there is no doubt at all that sons of the soil are favoured by the powers that be at the expense of the Uitlander.

Kruger has done very well by dealing in farms: for instance, he sold a farm, named Geduld, not long ago for the nice little sum of £100,000, representing, I should say, a profit of at least £99,500.

After waiting some time we were ushered into a very long room, at the end of which sat an old man in a big easy-chair, with a huge pipe in his mouth and a big spittoon on each side of him. It struck me as strange that a man of his world-wide notoriety did not possess a respectable residence and a better furnished reception chamber. His put me in mind of a second-class lodging-house in Bloomsbury, with the landlady getting the rent in advance on account of the suspicious smallness of the lodger's luggage.

My friend, of course, was well known to Kruger, and after a few words of greeting between the two, I was introduced, and when the President heard that I was only a visitor from England who had come to see Pretoria, and that I wanted nothing, the old one brightened up and shook me warmly by the hand, saying, as I learned afterwards, "Here is one of the very few who have come to see me and wanted nothing!"

The conversation being carried on through an interpreter in Dutch, I did not understand much of it, but by the heavy bangs the President gave to the unoffending table with his fist every now and again, I had the belief that he was not over-enamoured with my friend's suggestion that the price of dynamite should be reduced.

Farewells said, we left.

From what I saw of South Africa, I could not help thinking that the exclusive attention to gold mines does it harm. There is money to be made by attention to parochial, industrial, and municipal matters, of which the country stands in such great need.

My millionaire friend was with a Scotch acquaint-

ance at Johannesburg race-course when his eagle eye spotted a sovereign on the turf. With his usual masterly instinct his foot glided towards the coin, but his Scotch friend, equally eagle-eyed (Scots are built that way where coins are concerned), had also noticed the quid, and bending down, reached it just the fraction of a second before the millionaire got there. The millionaire straightened himself with a jerk, and rubbed his back as if suddenly pained.

Millionaire  
Morality.

"Thank you, John," said he to the Scot, who promptly delivered to him the coin. (There was "loud laughter," as the reporters have it, from the boys around.)

The Scot had been thinking about the incident.

"Look here," said he to the millionaire an hour or two later, "now, mon, tell me the truth—was that your quid I picked up?"

"Oh," said the millionaire promptly, "not till you gave it to me."

Boer  
v.  
Dutch

When I was in South Africa, I, of course, heard a great variety of stories as to how the Dutchmen got the best of the innocent Boers. One of these yarns, as to the worth of wool bought by a Boer, struck me as being neat. On the Boer returning home with the proceeds given him by the Dutchman, the farmer got out his Ready Reckoner, and failed to make the amount correct. He returned to the Dutchman who had robbed him, and asked him to explain it.

"Oh," said the Dutchman, "the mistake is that

you have been reckoning by last year's Ready Reckoner."

And the Boer was quite satisfied with this explanation.

**More  
Millionaire  
Morality.**

My friend "M." was once button-holed by a man who, amongst other worries, told him that he couldn't sleep for thinking of the money he owed a friend.

Quoth "M.", "Come and stand me a pint, and I will see what I can do."

The buttonholer, thinking that "M." would lend him the money he wanted, willingly paid for the pint of champagne. Just as it was finished some one called "M." out, and as he went he gave this piece of advice to his companion—

"Go and tell Sol you can't pay him, and he won't sleep for six weeks."

**A Catch Bet.**

In most of the wagers—and there were many—made by my friend "M." he managed to give them a humorous turn, which, if it did not salve the hurt of having to pay over a dead "pinch," certainly made the friends of the victim smile at his discomfiture. One of the many overnight bets he made was that he should carry a man, who was named, from Kimberley to Alexandrafontein, which was a distance of about five miles. A considerable amount of money was dependent on the result, and his friends, when they heard who the man was that he had to carry, said that the feat was impossible, as he weighed over 16 stone. "M.," however, merely

smiled, and next morning presented himself at the starting-post, where there was naturally a large crowd, as great interest had been evinced in the match. As a preliminary "M." began to strip himself, and said that as it was a warm day, he had no doubt that his burden would not object to do the same. The man to be carried took off his coat and waistcoat, but demurred when he was requested to remove his trousers. "M." then declared that his bet was to carry a man, not his clothes, and after a considerable amount of argument the referee gave judgment in "M.'s" favour.

Colonial  
Judaism.

In Auckland, New Zealand, some thirty odd years ago, the Jews who lived and traded there were not altogether so orthodox as their co-religionists in the other parts of the colony. One day the Hebrew traders of the town met and came to the conclusion that it would only be right and proper if they duly observed their Sabbath, notwithstanding a consequent loss of business. They sent for a Rabbi from England, who on arrival conferred with the committee of the Synagogue, and arranged that all commerce should be suspended amongst the Jews on their Sabbath (Saturday). As a result, all places of business kept by them were closed, and on the shutters of the various establishments were posted notices to the effect that the house of business was closed at sunset on Friday, and re-opened at dusk on the Saturday. One tradesman who was more knowing than the others, stole a march upon them, for he added to the notice in still larger letters the words—"But we live on the premises."



And now, good friends, my publisher has informed me that *Chestnuts* has reached the limit of what he considers the right size for this class of work, I trust that you who have gone so far with me, have not exceeded the limits of your patience, and if my little volume has pleased you, do not lend or give it to your friends, but recommend it to them to buy, as by doing so you will benefit "Swears."





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